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LETTERS AND LITERARY REMAINS
OF
EDWARD FITZGERALD





Fitz-Gerald's Cottage at Boulge.

Letters & Literary Remains
of
Edward FitzGerald

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VOL. VI

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THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

TAKEN FROM CALDERON'S

EL MÁGICO PRODIGIOSO

I made a fuller correction of *all* these Calderon Plays, except the “Life’s a Dream,” which I dare not look at. But I have somewhere mislaid—if not destroyed—the copies—as also, I believe, of Agamemnon, and Polonius.

E. F. G. *November 1882.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AURELIO	.	.	.	<i>Viceroy of Antioch.</i>
LELIO	.	.	.	<i>his Son.</i>
FABIO	.	.	.	<i>a chief Officer in Antioch.</i>
FLORO	.	.	.	<i>his Son.</i>
LISANDRO	.	.	.	<i>an aged Christian.</i>
JUSTINA	.	.	.	<i>his Daughter.</i>
LIVIA	.	.	.	<i>their Servant.</i>
CIPRIANO	.	.	.	<i>a Professor of Learning.</i>
EUSEBIO	}	.	.	<i>his Scholars.</i>
JULIAN				
LUCIFER	.	.	.	<i>the Evil Spirit.</i>

CITIZENS, SOLDIERS, &c.

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A retired Grove near Antioch.*

Enter CIPRIANO, EUSEBIO, and JULIAN, with books.

Cipr. This is the place, this the sequester'd spot
Where, in the flower about and leaf above,
I find the shade and quiet that I love,
And oft resort to rest a wearied wing ;
And here, good lads, leave me alone, but not
Lonely, companion'd with the books you bring :
That while the city from all open doors
Abroad her gaping population pours,
To swell the triumph of the pomp divine
That with procession, sacrifice, and song
Convoys her tutelary Zeus along
For installation in his splendid shrine ;
I, flying from the hubbub of the throng
That overflows her thoroughfares and streets,
And here but faintly touches and retreats,
In solitary meditation may
Discount at ease my summer holiday.

You to the city back, and take your fill
Of festival, and all that with the time's,
And your own youth's, triumphant temper
chimes ;

Leaving me here alone to mine ; until
Yon golden idol reaching overhead,
Dragg'd from his height, and bleeding out his fires
Along the threshold of the west, expires,
And drops into the sea's sepulchral lead.

Eusebio. Nay, sir, think once again, and go
with us,

Or, if you will, without us ; only, go ;
Lest Antioch herself as well as we
Cry out upon a maim'd solemnity.

Julian. Oh, how I wish I had not brought
the books,
Which you have ever at command—indeed,
Without them, all within them carry—here—
Garner'd—aloft—

Euseb. In truth, if stay you will,
I scarcely care to go myself.

Cipr. Nay, nay,
Good lads, good boys, all thanks, and all the more,
If you but leave it simply as I say.
You have been somewhat over-tax'd of late,
And want some holiday.

Julian. Well, sir, and you ?

Cipr. Oh, I am of that tougher age and stuff
Whose relaxation is its work. Besides,
Think you the poor Professor needs no time
For solitary tillage of his brains,

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Before such shrewd ingatherers as you
 Come on him for their harvest unawares ?
 Away, away ! and like good citizens
 Help swell the general joy with two such faces
 As such as mine would only help to cloud.

Euseb. Nay, sir—

Cipr. But I say, Yea, sir ! and my scholars
 By yea and nay as I would have them do.

Euseb. Well, then, farewell, sir.

Cipr. Farewell, both of you.

[*Exeunt EUSEBIO and JULIAN.*]

Away with them, light heart and wingèd heel,
 Soon leaving drowsy Pallas and her dull
 Professor out of sight, and out of mind.
 And yet not so perhaps ; and, were it so,
 Why, better with the frolic herd forgetting
 All in the youth and sunshine of the day
 Than ruminating in the shade apart.
 Well, each his way and humour ; some to lie
 Like Nature's sickly children in her lap,
 While all the stronger brethren are at play ;
 When ev'n the mighty Mother's self would seem
 Drest out in all her festival attire
 In honour of the universal Sire
 Whom Antioch as for her own to-day
 Propitiates. Hark, the music !—Speed, good lads,
 Or you will be too late. Ah, needless caution !
 Ev'n now already half way down the hill,
 Spurr'd by the very blood within their veins,
 They catch up others, who catching from them
 The fire they re-inflame, the flying troop

Consuming fast to distance in a cloud
Of dust themselves have kindled, whirls away
Where the shrill music blown above the walls
Tells of the solemn work begun within.
Why, ev'n the shrieking pipe that pierces here,
Shows me enough of all the long procession
Of white-robed priest and chanting chorister,
The milkwhite victim crown'd, and high aloft
The chariot of the nodding deity,
Whose brazen eyes that as their sockets see,
Stare at his loyal votaries. Ah me!—
Well, here too happier, if not wiser, those
Who, with the heart of unsuspecting youth,
Take up tradition from their father's hands
To pass it on to others in their turn ;
But leaving me behind them in the race
With less indeed than little appetite
For ceremonies, and to gods, like these,
That, let the rabble shout for as they please,
Another sort begin to shake their heads at,
And heav'n to rumble with uneasily
As flinging out some antiquated gear.
So wide, since subtle Greece the pebble flung
Into the sleeping pool of superstition,
Its undulation spreads to other shores,
And saps at the foundation of our schools.
—Why, this last Roman, Caius Plinius—
Who drawing nature's growth and history
Down to her root and first cause—What says he?—
Ev'n at the very threshold of his book
A definition laying, over which

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

The clumsy mimic idols of our shrines
Stumble and break to pieces—oh, here it is—

‘*Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque quærere,
Imbecillitatis humanæ reor*’—

‘All visible effigies of God
But types of human imbecility.’—

But what has Antioch to say to that,
Who at such cost of marble and of gold
Has built the very temple into which
She drags her tutelary Zeus to-day?—

Zeus veritable God, this effigy
Is none of him at all! But then, alas!

This same *Quapropter* follows a premiss
That elbows out Zeus with his effigy.

For—as I gather from his foreign word—
Wherever, or Whatever, Deity—

Si modo est alius—if distinct at all

From universal Nature—it must be

One all-informing, individual Whole,

All eye, all ear, all self, all sense, all soul—

Whereas this Zeus of ours, though Chief in-
deed—

Nay, *because* chief of other gods than he,

Comes from this Roman’s hand no God at all!—

This is a knotty question.

Lucifer (without). Nor while I

Tangle, for you, good doctor, to untie.

Cipr. What! The poor bird scarce settled
on the bough,

Before the fowler after him! How now?

Who’s there!

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

ACT I

Lucifer (entering habited as a Merchant). A stranger ; therefore pardon him,
Who somehow parted from his company,
And lost in his own thoughts (a company
You know one cannot lose so easily)
Has lost his way to Antioch.

Cipr. Antioch !
Whose high white towers and temples ev'n from
here
Challenge the sight, and scarce a random line
Traced by a wandering foot along the grass
But thither leads for centre.

Luc. The old story,
Of losing what one should have found on earth
By staring after something in the clouds—
Is it not so ?

Cipr. To-day too, when so many
Are flocking thither to the festival,
Whose current might have told—and taken—
you
The way you wish'd to go.

Luc. To say the truth,
My lagging here behind as much I think
From a distaste for that same festival
(Of which they told us as we came along)
As inadvertency—my way of life
Busied enough, if not too much, with men
To care for them in crowd on holidays,
When business stands, and neither they nor I
Gaping about can profit one another ;
And therefore, by your leave—but only so—

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

I fain would linger in this quiet place
Till evening, under whose dusky cloak
I may creep unobserved to Antioch.

Cipr. (*aside*). Humane address, at least.

And why should I
Grudge him the quiet I myself desire?—
(*Aloud*) Nay, this is public ground—for you, as
me,

To use it at your pleasure.

Luc. Still with yours—
Whom by your sober suit and composed looks,
And by this still society of books,
I take to be a scholar—

Cipr. And if so?

Luc. Ill brooking idle company.

Cipr. Perhaps ;
But that no wiser traveller need be—
And, if I judge of you as you of me,
Though with no book hung out for sign before,
Perchance a scholar too.

Luc. If so, more read
In men than books, as travellers are wont.
But, if myself but little of a bookman,
Addicted much to scholars' company,
Of whom I meet with many on my travels,
And who, you know, themselves are living books.

Cipr. And you have travell'd much?

Luc. Ay, little else,
One may say, since I came into the world
Than going up and down it : visiting
As many men and cities as Ulysses,

From first his leaving Troy without her crown,
Along the charmèd coasts he pass'd, with all
The Polyphemes and Circes in the way,
Right to the Pillars where his ship went down.
Nay, and yet further, where the dark Phœnician
Digs the pale metal which the sun scarce deigns
With a slant glance to ripen in earth's veins :
Or back again so close beneath his own
Proper dominion, that the very mould
Beneath he kindles into proper gold,
And strikes a living Iris into stone.

Cipr. One place, however, where Ulysses was,
I think you have not been to—where he saw
Those he left dead upon the field of Troy
Come one by one to lap the bowl of blood
Set for them in the fields of Asphodel.

Luc. Humph !—as to that, a voyage which
if all
Must take, less need to brag of ; or perchance
Ulysses, or his poet, apt to err
About the people and their doings there—
But let the wonders in the world below
Be what they may ; enough in that above
For any sober curiosity,
Without one's diving down before one's time :
Not only countries now as long ago
Known, till'd, inhabited, and civilized ;
As Egypt, Greece, and Rome, with all their arts,
Trades, customs, polities, and history :
But deep in yet scarce navigated seas,
Countries uncouth, with their peculiar growths

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Of vegetation or of life ; where men
Are savage as the soil they never till ;
Or never were, or were so long ago,
Their very story blotted from the page
Of earth they wrote it on ; unless perchance
From riot-running nature's overgrowth
Of swarming vegetation, peeps some scarce
Decypherable monument, which yet,
To those who find the key, perchance has told
Stories of men, more mighty men, of old,
Or of the gods themselves who walk'd the world
When with the dews of first creation wet.

Cipr. Oh knowledge from the fountain freshly
drawn

Without the tedious go-between of books !
But with fresh soul and senses unimpair'd
What from the pale reflexion of report
We catch at second hand, and much beside
That in our solitary cells we miss.

Luc. Ay, truly we that travel see strange
things,

Though said to tell of stranger ; some of us,
Deceived ourselves, or seeking to deceive,
With prodigies and monsters which the world,
As wide and full of wonders as it is,
Never yet saw, I think, nor ever will :
Which yet your scholars use for clay and straw
Of which to build your mighty folios—
For instance, this same bulky Roman here,
Whose leaf you turn'd, I doubt impatiently,
When my intrusion rustled in the leaves—

Cipr. Hah ! But how knew you—

Luc. Nay, if some stray words
Of old familiar Latin met my ear
As I stood hesitating.

Cipr. (*holding up the book*). This at least
You read then ?

Luc. One might say before 'twas written.

Cipr. But how so ?

Luc. Oh, this same sufficient Roman,
What is he but another of the many
Who having seen a little and heard more
That others pick'd as loosely up before,
Constructs his little bird's-nest universe
Of shreds and particles of false and true
Cemented with some thin philosophy,
All filch'd from others, as from him to be
By the next pilfering philosopher,
Till blown away before the rising wind
Of true discovery, or dropt to nothing
After succeeding seasons of neglect.

Cipr. (*aside*). A strange man this—sharp wit
and biting word.

(*Aloud*) Yet surely Man, after so many ages
Of patient observation of the world
He lives in, is entitled by the wit
Vouchsafed him by the Maker of the world
To draw into some comprehensive whole
The stray particulars.

Luc. Ay, and forsooth,
Not only the material world he lives in ;
But, having of this undigested heap

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Composed a World, must make its Maker too,
Of abstract attributes, of each of which
Still more unsure than of the palpable,
Forthwith he draws to some consistent One
The accumulated ignorance of each
In so compact a plausibility
As light to carry as it was to build.

Cipr. But, since (I know not how) you hit
upon

The question I was trying when you came ;
And, spite of your disclaiming scholarship,
Seem versed in that which occupies the best—
If Pliny blunder with his single God,
As in our twilight reason well he may,
Confess however that a Deity
Plural and self-discordant, as he says,
Is yet more like frail man's imagination,
Who, for his own necessities and lusts,
Splits up and mangles the Divine idea
To pieces, as he wants a piece of each ;
Not only gods for all the elements
Divided into land, and sea, and sky ;
But gods of health, wealth, love, and fortune ;
nay,
Of war and murder, rape and robbery ;
Men of their own worse nature making gods
To serve the very vices that suggest them,
Which yet upon their fellow-men they visit
(Else were an end of human polity)
With chain and fine and banishment and death.
So that unless man made such gods as these,

Then are these gods worse than the man they made.

And for the attributes, which though indeed
You gibe at us for canvassing, yourself
Must grant—as whether one or manifold,
Deity in its simplest definition
Must be at least eternal—

Luc.

Well?—

Cipr.

Yet those

Who stuff Olympus are so little that,
That Zeus himself, the sovereign of all,
Barely escaped devouring at his birth
By his own father, who anticipated
And found some such hard measure for himself;
And as for Zeus' own progeny—some born
Of so much baser matter than his brain,
As from his eggs, which the all-mighty swan
Impregnated, and mortal Leda laid;
And whose two chicken-deities once hatcht
Now live and die on each alternate day.

Luc. Ay, but if much of this be allegory
In which the wisdom of antiquity
Veils the pure Deity from eyes profane—

Cipr. —Deity taking arms against itself
Under Troy walls, wounding and wounded—ay,
And, trailing heavenly ichor from their wounds,
So help'd by others from the field to one
Who knew the leech's art themselves did not.

Luc. Softly—if not to swear to allegory,
Still less to all the poets sing of heaven,
High up Parnassus as they think to sit.

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. But these same poets, therefore sacred
call'd,

They are who these same allegories spin
Which time and fond tradition consecrate ;
What might have been of the divine within
So overgrown with folly and with sin
As but a spark of God would such impure
Assimilation with himself abjure,
Which yet with all the nostril that he may
Zeus snuffs from Antioch's sacrifice to-day.
Besides, beyond the reach of allegory
The gods themselves in their own oracles
Doubly themselves convict—
As when they urge two nations on to war,
By promising the victory to each ;
Whereby on one side their omniscience
Suffers, as their all-goodness on the other.

Luc. What if such seeming contradictions aim
Where human understanding cannot reach ?
But granting for the sake of argument,
And for that only, what you now premise ;
What follows ?

Cipr. Why, that if, as Pliny writes,
Deity by its very definition
Be one, eternal, absolute, all wise,
All good, omnipotent, all ear, all eyes,
Incapable of disintegration—
If this be Deity indeed—

Luc. Then what ?

Cipr. Simply—that we in Antioch know him
not.

Luc. Rash leap to necessary non-conclusion
From a premiss that quarrels with itself
More than the deity it would impugn ;
For if one God eternal and all wise,
Omnipotent to do as to devise,
Whence this disorder and discordance in—
Not only this material universe,
That seems created only to be rack'd
By the rebellion of its elements,
In earthquake and tempestuous anarchy—
But also in the human microcosm
You say created to reflect it all ?
For Deity, all goodness as all wise,
Why create man the thing of lust and lies
You say reflects himself in his false god ?—
By modern oracle no more convicted
Of falsehood, than by that first oracle
Which first creation settled in man's heart.
No, if you must define, premise, conclude,
Away with all the coward squeamishness
That dares not face the universe it questions ;
Blinking the evil and antagonism
Into its very constitution breathed
By him who, but himself to quarrel with,
Quarrels as might the many with each other.
Or would you be yourself one with yourself,
Catch hold of such as Epicurus' skirt,
Who, desperately confounded this confusion
Of matter, spirit, good and evil, yea,
Godhead itself, into a universe
That is created, roll'd along, and ruled,

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

By no more wise direction than blind Chance.
Trouble yourself no more with disquisition
That by sad, slow, and unprogressive steps
Of wasted soul and body lead to nothing :
And only sure of life's short breathing-while,
And knowing that the gods who threaten us
With after-vengeance of the very crimes
They revel in themselves, are nothing more
Than the mere coinage of our proper brain
To cheat us of our scanty pleasure here
With terror of a harsh account hereafter ;—
Eat, drink, be merry ; crown yourselves with
 flowers

About as lasting as the heads they garland ;
And snatching what you can of life's poor
 feast,

When summon'd to depart, with no ill grace,
Like a too greedy guest, cling to the table
Whither the generations that succeed
Press forward famish'd for their turn to feed.
Nay, or before your time self-surfeited,
Wait not for nature's signal to be gone,
But with the potion of the spotted weed,
That peradventure wild beside your door
For some such friendly purpose cheaply grows,
Anticipate too tardy nature's call :
Ev'n as one last great Roman of them all
Dismiss'd himself betimes into the sum
Of universe ; not nothing to become ;
For that can never cease that was before ;
But not that sad Lucretius any more.

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN ACT I

Cipr. Oh, were it not that sometimes through
the dark,
That walls us all about, a random ray
Breaks in to tell one of a better day
Beyond—

Enter LELIO and FLORO, as about to fight.

Lelio. Enough—these branches that exclude
the sun
Defy all other inquisition.
No need of further way.

Floro. Nor further word ;
Draw, sir, at once—

Lelio. Nay, parry that yourself
Which waited not your summons to be drawn.

Cipr. Lelio, and Floro ?

Floro. What, will the leaves blab ?

Lelio. And with their arms arrest a just
revenge ?

Cipr. And well indeed may trees begin to talk,
When men as you go babbling.

Floro. Whoso speaks
And loves his life, hold back.

Lelio. I know the voice,
But dazzled with the darkness—Cipriano ?

Cipr. Ay ; Cipriano, sure enough ; as you
Lelio and Floro.

Floro. Well, let that suffice,
And leave us as you find us.

Cipr. No, not yet—

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Floro. Not yet !

Lelio. Good Cipriano—

Cipr. Till I know

How it has come to pass that two such friends,
Each of the noblest blood in Antioch,
Are here to shed it by each other's hands.

Lelio. Sudden surprise, and old respect for you,
Suspend my sword a moment, Cipriano,
That else—

Floro. Stand back, stand back ! You are a scholar,

And better versed in logic than the laws
Of honour ; and perhaps have yet to learn
That when two noblemen have drawn the sword,
One only must return it to the sheath.

Lelio. 'Tis so indeed—once more, stand off.

Cipr. And once more

Back, both of you, say I ; if of your lives
Regardless, not of mine, which thus, unarm'd,
I fling between your swords—

Lelio, I look to you—Floro, as ever
Somewhat hot-headed and thrasonical—

Or do you hold with him the scholar's gown

Has smother'd all the native soldiery

That saucy so-call'd honour to itself

Alone mis-arrogates ? You are deceived :

I am like you by birth a gentleman,

Under like obligation to the laws

Of that true honour, which my books indeed

May help distinguish from its counterfeit,

But, older as I am, have yet not chill'd

From catching fire at any just affront—
And let me tell you this too—those same books,
Ancient and modern, tell of many a hand
That, turning most assiduously the leaf,
When the time came, could wield as well the
sword.

I am unarm'd : but you, with all your swords,
I say you shall not turn them on each other
Till you have told me what the quarrel is ;
Which after hearing if I own for one
That honour may not settle with good word,
I pledge my own to leave it to the sword.
Now, Lelio !—

Lelio. One answer does for both :
He loves where I love.

Floro. No—I thus much more—
He dares to love where I had loved before ;
Betrayèd friendship adding to the score
Of upstart love.

Lelio. You hear him, Cipriano ?
And after such a challenge—

Cipr. Yet a moment.
As there are kinds of honour, so of love—
And ladies—

Lelio. Cipriano, Cipriano !
One friend my foe for daring love where I,
Let not another, daring doubt that he
Honours himself in so dishonouring me—

Floro. Slanting your sharp divisions on a jewel
That if the sun turn'd all his beams upon
He could not find, or make, a flaw—

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. Nor I then,
With far less searching scrutiny than Phæbus—
I am to understand then, such a fair
Jewel as either would in wedlock wear.

Floro. And rather die than let another dare.

Cipr. Enough, enough ! of Lelio's strange
logic,

And Floro's more intelligible rant,
And back to sober metaphor. Which of you
Has this fair jewel turn'd her light upon ?

Floro (after a pause). Why, who would boast—

Lelio. Indeed, how could she be
The very pearl of chastity she is,
Turn'd she her glances either left or right ?

Cipr. Which therefore each, as he obliquely
steals,

Counts on as given him only—

Floro. To have done
With metaphor and logic, what you will,
So as we fall to work ;
Or if you must have reason, this, I say,
Resolves itself to a short syllogism—
Whether she give or we presume upon—
If one of us devote himself to win her,
How dares another cross him ?

Cipr. But if she
Not only turn to neither, but still worse,
Or better, turn from both ?

Lelio. But love by long devotion may be won,
That only one should offer—

Floro. And that one

Who first !—

Lelio. Who first !—

Cipr. And all this while, forsooth,

The lady, of whose purity one test

Is her unblemisht unpublicity,

Is made a target for the common tongue

Of Antioch to shoot reproaches at

For stirring up two noblemen to blood.

From which she only can escape, forsooth,

By choosing one of two she cares not for

At once ; or else, to mend the matter, when

He comes to claim her by the other's blood.

Lelio. At least she will not hate him, live or
dead,

Who staked his life upon her love.

Cipr.

Small good

To him who lost the stake ; and he that won—

Will she begin to love whom not before

For laying unloved blood upon her door ;

Or, if she ever loved at all, love more ?

Is this fair logic, or of one who knows

No more of woman's honour than of man's ?

Come, come, no more of beating round the bush.

You know how I have known and loved you
both,

As brothers—say as sons—upon the score

Of some few years and some few books read
more—

Though two such fiery fine young gentlemen,

Put up your swords and be good boys again,

Deferring to your ancient pedagogue ;

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

If cold by time and studies, as you say,
Then fitter for a go-between in love,
And warm at least in loyalty to you.
These jewels—to take up the metaphor
Until you choose to drop it of yourselves,—
These jewels have their caskets, I suppose—
Kindred and circumstance, I mean—

Lelio. Oh such
As by their honourable poverty
Do more than doubly set their jewel off!

Cipr. Ev'n so? And may not one, who, you
agree,
Proof-cold against suspicion of the kind,
Be so far trusted, as, if not to see,
To hear, at least, of where, and how, enshrined?

Floro. I know not what to answer. How
say you?

Lelio. Relying on your honour and tried love—
Justina, daughter of the old Lisandro.

Cipr. I know them; her if scarcely, yet how
far

Your praises short of her perfections are;
Him better, by some little service done
That rid him of a greater difficulty,
And would again unlock his door to me—
—And who knows also, if you both agree,
Her now closed lips; if but a sigh between
May tell which way the maiden heart may lean?

Floro. Again, what say you, *Lelio*?

Lelio. I, for one,
Content with that decision.

Floro.

Be it so.

Cipr. Why, after all, behold how luckily
You stumbled on this rock in honour's road,
That serves instead for Cupid's stepping-stone.
And when the knightly courage of you both
Was all at fault to hammer out the way,
Who knows but some duenna-doctor may ?
And will—if but like reasonable men,
Not angry boys, you promise to keep sheathed
Your swords, while from her father or herself
I gather, from a single sigh perhaps,
To which, if either, unaware she turns ;
Provided, if to one, the other yield ;
But if to neither, both shall quit the field.
What say you both to this ?

Lelio.

Ay—I for one.

Floro. And I ; provided on the instant done.

Cipr. No better time than now, when, as I
think,

The city, with her solemn uproar busy,
Shuts her we have to do with close within.
But you must come along with me, for fear
Your hands go feeling for your swords again
If left together : and besides to know
The verdict soon as spoken.

Lelio.

Let us go. [*Exeunt.*

Lucifer (*re-appearing*). Ay, Cipriano, faster
than you think ;

For I will lend you wings to burn yourself
In the same taper they are singed withal.—
By the quick feelers of iniquity

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

That from hell's mouth reach through this lower
world,
And tremble to the lightest touch of mischief,
Warn'd of an active spirit hereabout
Of the true God inquisitive, and restless
Under the false by which I rule the world,
Here am I come to test it for myself.
And lo ! two fools have put into my hand
Thesnare that, wanting most, I might have miss'd ;
That shall not him alone en-mesh, but *her*
Whom I have long and vainly from the ranks
Striv'n to seduce of Him, the woman-born,
Who is one day to bruise the serpent's head—
So is it written ; but meanwhile my hour
On earth is not accomplisht, and I fain
Of this detested race would hinder all
From joining in the triumph of my fall
Whom I may hinder ; and of these, these twain ;
Each other by each other snaring ; yea,
Either at once the other's snare and prey.
Oh, my good doctor, you must doubt, you must,
And take no more the good old gods on trust ;
To Antioch then away ; but not so fast
But I shall be before you, starting last. [Exit.

SCENE II.—*A room in LISANDRO's house.*

Enter LISANDRO, JUSTINA, and LIVIA.

Justina. At length the day draws in.

Lisandro.

And in with it

The impious acclamation that all day,
Block up our doors and windows as we may,
Insults our faith, and doubly threatens it.
Is all made fast, Justina ?

Just. All shall be, sir,
When I have seen you safely to your rest.

Lis. You know how edict after edict aim'd
By Rome against the little band of Christ—
And at a time like this, the people drunk
With idol-ecstasy—

Just. Alas, alas !

Lis. Oh, gladly would I scatter these last
drops

That now so scarcely creep along my veins,
And these thin locks that tremble o'er the grave,
In such a martyrdom as swept to heav'n
The holy Paul who planted, and all those
Who water'd here the true and only faith,
Were 't not for thee, for fear of thee, Justina,
Drawing you down at once into my doom,
Or leaving you behind, alone, to hide
From insult and suspicion worse than death—
I dare not think of it. Make fast ; keep close ;
And then, God's will be done ! You know we
lie

Under a double danger.

Just. How so, sir ?

Lis. Aurelio and Fabio, both, you know,
So potent in the city, and but now
Arm'd with a freshly whetted sword of vengeance
Against the faith, but double-edged on us,

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Should they but know, as know they must, their
sons

Haunting the doors of this suspected house.

Just. Alas, alas !

That I should draw this danger on your head !
Which yet you know—

Lis. I know, I know—God knows,
My darling daughter ; but that chaste reserve
Serves but to quicken beauty with a charm
They find not in the wanton Venus here :
Drawn as they are by those withdrawing eyes
Irradiate from a mother's, into whose
The very eyes of the Redeemer look'd,
And whom I dare not haste to join in heav'n
At cost of leaving thee defenceless here.

Just. Sufficient for the day ! And now the
day

Is done. Come to your chamber—lean on me—
Livia and I will see that all is fast ;
And, that all seen to, ere we sleep ourselves,
Come to your bedside for your blessing. Hark !
Knocking ev'n now ! See to it, Livia.

(She leads out LISANDRO, and returns.)

Oh, well I got my father to his chamber !
What is it?—

Livia. One would see your father, madam.

Just. At such an hour ! He cannot, Livia ;
You know, the poor old man is gone to rest—
Tell him—

Livia. If not your father, then yourself,
On matter that he says concerns you both.

Just. Me too !—Oh surely neither of the twain
We both so dread ?

Livia. No, madam ; rather, one
I think that neither need have cause to fear,—
Cipriano.

Just. *Cipriano !* The great scholar,
Who did my father service, as I think,
And now may mean another ; and God knows
How much, or quickly, needed !

Livia. So he says.

Just. What shall I do ! Will not to-morrow—

Cipriano (entering). Oh, lady,
You scarce can wonder more than I myself
At such a visit, and at such an hour,
Only let what I come to say excuse
The coming, and so much unmannerly.

Just. My father is withdrawn, sir, for the
night,
Never more wanting rest ; I dare not rouse him,
And least of all with any troubled news.
Will not to-morrow—

Cipr. What I have to say
Best told to-night, at once ; and not the less
Since you alone, whom chiefly it concerns,
Are here to listen.

Just. I !—Well, sir, relying
On your grave reputation as a scholar,
And on your foregone favour to my father,
If I should dare to listen—

Cipr. And alone ?

Just. Livia, leave us. [Exit LIVIA.]

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. Oh, lady—oh, Justina—
 (Thus stammers the ambassador of love
 In presence of its sovereign)—
 You must—cannot but—know how many eyes
 Those eyes have wounded—

Just. Nay, sir,—

Cipr. Nay, but hear.

I do not come for idle compliment,
 Nor on my own behalf; but in a cause
 On which hang life and death as well as love.
 Two of the noblest youths in Antioch,
 Lelio and Floro—Nay, but hear me out :
 Mine, and till now almost from birth each other's
 Inseparable friends, now deadly foes
 For love of you—

Just. Oh, sir !

Cipr. I have but now
 Parted their swords in mortal quarrel cross'd.

Just. Oh, that was well.

Cipr. I think, for several sakes—
 Their own, their fathers', even Antioch's,
 That would not lose one of so choice a pair ;
 And, I am sure you think so, lady, yours,
 So less than covetous of public talk,
 And least of all at such a fearful cost.

Just. Oh, for all sakes all thanks !

Cipr. Yet little due
 For what so lightly done, and it may be
 So insufficiently ; this feud not stopt—
 Suspended only, on a single word—
 Which now at this unseasonable hour

I stand awaiting from the only lips
That can allay the quarrel they have raised.

Just. Alas, why force an answer from my lips
So long implied in silent disregard?

Cipr. Yet, without which, like two fierce
dogs, but more
Exasperated by the holding back,
They will look for it in each other's blood.

Just. And think, poor men, to find their
answer there!

Oh, sir, you are the friend, the friend of both,
A famous scholar; with authority
And eloquence to press your friendship home.
Surely in words such as you have at will
You can persuade them, for all sakes—and yet
No matter mine perhaps—but, as you say,
Their father's, Antioch's, their own—

Cipr. Alas!

I doubt you know not in your maiden calm
How fast all love and logic such as that
Burns stubble up before a flame like this.

Just. (aside). And none in heav'n to help
them!

Cipr. All I can
But one condition hardly wringing out
Of peace, till my impartial embassy
Have ask'd on their behalf, which of the twain—
How shall I least offend?—you least disdain.

Just. Disdain is not the word, sir; oh, no, no!
I know and honour both as noblemen
Of blood and station far above my own;

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

And of so suitable accomplishments.

Oh, there are many twice as fair as I,
And of their own conditions, who, with half
My wooing, long ere this had worn the wreath
Tied with a father's blessing, and all Antioch
To follow them with Hymenæal home.

Cipr. But if these fiery men, do what one will,
Will look no way but this?—

Just. Oh, but they will ;
Divert their eyes awhile, a little while,
Their hearts will follow ; such a sudden passion
Can but have struck a shallow root—perhaps
Ere this had perish'd, had not rival pride
Between them blown it to this foolish height.

Cipr. Disdain is not the word then. Well,
to seek,
What still as wide as ever from assent—
Could you but find it in your heart to feel
If but a hair's-breadth less—say disesteem
For one than for another—

Just. No, no, no !
Even to save their lives I could not say
What is not—cannot—nay, and if it could
And I could say that was that is not—*can* not—
How should that hair's-breadth less of hope to one
Weigh with the other to desist his suit,
Both furious as you tell me ?

Cipr. And both are :
But ev'n that single hair thrown in by you
Will turn the scale that else the sword must do.

Just. But surely must it not suffice for both

That they who drew the sword in groundless hope
Sheathe it in sure despair? Despair! Good God!
For a poor creature like myself, despair!
That men with souls to which a word like that
Lengthens to infinite significance,
Should pin it on a wretched woman's sleeve!
But as men talk—I mean, so far as I
Can make them, as they say, despair of that
Of which, even for this world's happiness,
Despair is better hope of better things—
Will not my saying—and as solemnly
As what one best may vouch for; that so far
As any hope of my poor liking goes,
Despair indeed they must—why should not this
Allay their wrath, and let relapsing love
In his old channel all the clearer run
For this slight interjection in the current?
Why should it not be so?

Cipr.

Alas, I know not:

For though as much they promised, yet I doubt
When each, however you reject him now,
Believes you might be won hereafter still,
Were not another to divide the field;
Each upon each charging the exigence
He will not see lies in himself alone,
Might draw the scarcely sheathèd sword at once;
Or stifled hate under a hollow truce
Blaze out anew at some straw's provocation,
And I perhaps not by to put it out.

Just. What can, what can be done then?

Cipr.

Oh Justina,

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Pardon this iteration. Think once more,
Before your answer with its consequence
Travels upon my lip to destiny.
I know you more than maiden-wise reserved
To other importunities of love
Than those which ev'n the pure for pure confess ;
Yet no cold statue, which, however fair,
Could not inflame so fierce a passion ; but
A breathing woman with a beating heart,
Already touch'd with pity, you confess,
For these devoted men you cannot love.
Well, then—I will not hint at such a bower
As honourable wedlock would entwine
About your father's age and your own youth,
Which ev'n for him—and much less for yourself—
You would not purchase with an empty hand.
But yet, with no more of your heart within
Than what you now confess to—pity—pity,
For generous youth wearing itself away
In thankless adoration at your door,
Neglecting noble opportunities ;
Turning all love but yours to deadly hate—
Sedate, and wise, and modestly resolved,
Can you be, lady, of yourself so sure—
(And surely they will argue your disdain
As apt to yield as their devotion)—
That, all beside so honourably faced,
You, who now look with pity, and perhaps
With gratitude, upon their blundering zeal,
May not be won to turn an eye less loath
On one of them, and blessing one, save both ?

Just. Alas ! I know it is impossible—
Not if they wasted all their youth in sighs,
And even slavish importunities,
I could but pity—pity all the more
That all the less what only they implore
To yield ; so great a gulf between us lies.

Cipr. What—is the throne pre-occupied ?

Just. If so,
By one that Antioch dreams little of.
But it grows late : and if we spoke till dawn,
I have no more to say.

Cipr. Nor more will hear ?

Just. Alas, sir, to what purpose ? When, all
said,
Said too as you have said it—
And I have but the same hard answer still ;
Unless to thank you once and once again,
And charge you with my thankless errand back,
But in such better terms,
As, if it cannot stop ill blood, at least
Shall stop blood-shedding 'tween these hapless
men.

Cipr. And shall the poor ambassador who fail'd
In the behalf of those who sent him here,
Hereafter dare to tell you how he sped
In making peace between them ?

Just. Oh, do but that,
And what poor human prayer can win from
Heav'n,

You shall not be the poorer. So, good-night !

[*Exit.*]

ACT II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. Good-night, good-night ! Oh Lelio
and Floro !

If ever friends well turn'd to deadly foes,
Wiser to fight than I to interpose. [Exit.

Lucifer (*passing from behind*). The shaft has
hit the mark ; and by the care
Of hellish surgery shall fester there. [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The sea-shore ; a storm raging.*

Cipriano (*cavalierly drest*). Oh, mad, mad,
mad, ambition ! to the skies
Lifting to drop me deep as Hades down !—
What ! Cipriano—what the once so wise
Cipriano—quit his wonted exercise
Among the sober walks of old renown,
To fly at love—to swell the wind with sighs
Vainer than learning—doff the scholar's gown
For cap and feather, and such airy guise
In which triumphant love is wont to go,
But wins less acceptance in her eyes—
The only eyes in which I cared to show—
My heart beneath the borrow'd feather bleeding—
Than in the sable suit of long ago,
When heart-whole for another's passion pleading.
She loves not Floro—loves not Lelio,
Whose quarrel sets the city's throat agape,

And turns her reputation to reproof
With altercation of some dusky shape
Haunting the twilight underneath her roof—
Which each believes the other :—and, for me,
The guilty one of the distracted three,
She closest veils herself, or waves aloof
In scorn ; or in such self-abasement sweet
As sinks me deep and deeper at her feet,
Bids me return—return for very shame
Back to my proper studies and good name,
Nor waste a life on one who, let me pine
To death, will never but in death be mine.
Oh, she says well—Oh, heart of stone and ice
Unworthy of the single sacrifice
Of one true heart's devotion ! Oh divine
Creature, whom all the glory and the worth
That ever ravaged or redeem'd the earth
Were scanty worship offer'd at your shrine !
Oh Cipriano, master-fool of all
The fools that unto thee for wisdom call ;
Of supercilious Pallas first the mock,
And now blind Cupid's scorn, and laughing-stock ;
Who in fantastic arrogance at odds
With the Pantheon of your people's gods
Ransack'd the heavens for one more pure and whole
To fill the empty temple of the soul,
Now caught by retribution in the mesh
Of one poor piece of perishable flesh—
What baser demon of the pit would buy
With all your ruin'd aspirations ?

Lucifer (within).

I !—

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. What ! The very winds and waters
Hear, and answer to the cry
She is deaf to !—Better thrown
On distracted nature's bosom
With some passion like my own
Torn and tortured : where the sun
In the elemental riot
Ere his daily reign half done,
Leaves half-quencht the tempest-drencht
Welkin scowling on the howling
Wilderness of waves that under
Slash of whirlwind, spur of lightning,
Roar of thunder, black'ning, whit'ning,
Fling them foaming on the shore—
Let confusion reign and roar !—
Lightnings, for your target take me !
Waves, upon the sharp rock break me,
Or into your monstrous hollow
Back regurgitating hurl ;
Let the mad tornado whirl me
To the furthest airy circle
Dissipated of the sky,
Or the gaping earth down-swallow
To the centre !—

Lucifer (entering). By-and-bye.

Cipr. Hark again ! and in her monstrous
Labour, with a human cry
Nature yearning—what portentous
Glomeration of the storm
Darkly cast in human form,
Has she bolted !—

Luc. As among
Flashes of the lightning flung
Beside you, in its thunder now
Aptly listen'd—

Cipr. What art thou ?

Luc. One of a realm, though dimly in your
charts

Discern'd, so vast that as from out of it
As from a fountain all the nations flow,
Back they shall ebb again ; and sway'd by One
Who, without Oriental over-boast,
Because from him all kings their crowns derive,
Is rightfully saluted King of kings,
Whose reign is as his kingdom infinite,
Whose throne is heaven, and earth his footstool,
and

Sun, moon, and stars his diadem and crown.
Who at the first disposal of his kingdom
And distribution into sea and land—
Me, who for splendour of my birth and grand
Capacities above my fellows shone,
Star of the Morning, Lucifer, alone—
Me he made captain of the host who stand
Clad as the morning star about his throne.
Enough for all ambition but my own ;
Who discontented with the all but all
Of chiefest subject of Omnipotence
Rebell'd against my Maker ; insolence
Avenged as soon as done on me and all
Who bolster'd up rebellion, by a fall
Far as from heav'n to Hades. Madness, I know ;

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

But worse than madness whining to repent
Under a rod that never will relent.
Therefore about the land and sea I go
Arm'd with the very instrument of hate
That blasted me : lightnings anticipate
My coming, and the thunder rolls behind ;
Thus charter'd to enlarge among mankind,
And to recruit from human discontent
My ranks in spirit, not in number, spent.
Of whom, in spite of this brave gaberdine,
I recognize thee one : thee, by the line
Scarr'd on thy brow, though not so deep as mine ;
Thee by the hollow circles of those eyes
Where the volcano smoulders but not dies :
Whose fiery torrent running down has scarr'd
The cheek that time had not so deeply marr'd.
Do not I read thee rightly ?

Cipr.

But too well ;

However come to read me—

Luc.

By the light

Of my own darkness reading yours—how deep !
But not, as mine is, irretrievable :
Who from the fulness of my own perdition
Would, as I may, revenge myself on him
By turning to fruition your despair—
What if I make you master at a blow,
Not only of the easy woman's heart
You now despair of as impregnable,
And waiting but my word to let you in,
But lord of nature's secret, and the lore
That shall not only with the knowledge, but

Possess you with the very power of him
You sought so far and vainly for before :
So far All-eyes, All-wise, Omnipotent—
If not to fashion, able yet to shake
That which the other took such pains to make—
As in the hubbub round us ; I who blurr'd
The spotless page of nature at a word
With darkness and confusion, will anon
Clear it, to write another marvel on.—

By the word of power that binds
And loosens ; by the word that finds
Nature's heart through all her rinds,
Hearken, waters, fires, and winds ;
Having had your roar, once more
Down with you, or get you gone.

Cipr. With the clatter and confusion
Of the universe about me
Reeling—all within, without me,—
Dizzy, dazzled—if delusion,
Waking, dreaming, seeing, seeming—
Which I know not—only, lo !
Like some mighty madden'd beast
Bellowing in full career
Of fury, by a sudden blow
Stunn'd, and in a moment stopp'd
All the roar, or into slow
Death-ward-drawing murmur, leaving
Scarce the fallen carcase heaving,
With the fallen carcase dropp'd.—

Behold ! the word scarce fallen from his lips,
Swift almost as a human smile may chase

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

A frown from some conciliated face,
The world to concord from confusion slips :
The winds that blew the battle up dead slain,
Or with their tatter'd standards swept amain
From heav'n ; the billows of the erected deep
Roll'd with their crests into the foaming plain ;
While the scared earth begins abroad to peep
And smooth her ruffled locks, as from a rent
In the black centre of the firmament,
Revenging his unnatural eclipse,
The Lord of heav'n from its ulterior blue
That widens round him as he pierces through
The folded darkness, from his sovereign height
Slays with a smile the dragon-gloom of night.

Luc. All you have heard and witness'd hitherto
But a foretaste to quicken appetite
For that substantial after-feast of power
That I shall set you down to take your fill of :
When not the fleeting elements alone
Of wind, and fire, and water, floating wrack,
But this same solid frame of earth and stone,
Yea, with the mountain loaded on her back,
Reluctantly, shall answer to your spell
From a more adamant heart stone-cold
Than her's you curse for inaccessible.
What, you would prove it? Let the mountain there
Step out for witness. Listen, and behold.
Monster upshot of upheaving¹

¹ The Phenomena that follow, and are here supposed to be magic illusions created in Cipriano's Eyes, are in the original represented by theatrical Machinery.

Earth, by fire and flood conceiving ;
Shapeless ark of refuge, whither,
When came deluge creeping round,
Man retreated—to be drown'd—
Now your granite anchor, fast
In creation's centre, cast,
Come with all your tackle cleaving
Down before the magic blast—
Cipr. And the unwieldy vessel, lo !
Rib and deck of rock, and shroud
Of pine, top-gallanted with cloud,
All her forest-canvas squaring,
Down the undulating woodland
As she flounders to and fro
All before her tearing, bearing
Down upon us—

Luc. Anchor, ho !—
Behold the ship in port ! And what if freighted
With but one jewel, worthy welcome more
Than ever full-fraught Argosy awaited,
At last descried by desperate eyes ashore ;
From the first moment of her topsail showing
Like a thin cobweb spun 'twixt sea and sky ;
Then momentarily before a full wind blowing
Into her full proportions, till athwart
The seas that bound beneath her, by and bye
She sweeps full sail into the cheering port—
Strangest bark that ever plied
In despite of wind and tide,
At the captain's magic summons

Cipr. Where she is?—

Luc. As I told you, where shall be.
At least this mountain after a short labour
Has brought forth something better than a mouse ;
And what then after a whole year's gestation
Accomplish under our joint midwifery,
Under a bond by which you bind you mine
In fewer and no redder drops than needs
The leech of land or water when he bleeds ?
Let us about—but first upon his base
The mountain we must study in replace,
That else might puzzle your geography.
Come, take your stand upon the deck with me,
Till with her precious cargo safe inside,
And all her forest-colours flying wide,
The mighty vessel put again to sea—
What, are you ready ?—Wondrous smack,
As without a turn or tack
Hither come, so thither back,
And let subside the ruffled deep
Of earth to her primæval sleep.—
How steadily her course the good ship trims,
While Antioch far into the distance swims,
With all her follies bubbling in the wake ;
Her scholars that more hum than honey make :
Muses so chaste as never of their kind
Would breed, and Cupid deaf as well as blind :
For Cipriano, wearied with the toil
Of so long working on a thankless soil,
At last embarking upon magic seas
In a more wondrous Argo than of old,

ACT III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Sets sails with me for such Hesperides
As glow with more than dragon-guarded gold.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Before the mountain.* CIPRIANO.

Cipriano. Now that at last in his eternal round
Hyperion, after skirting either pole,
Of his own race has set the flaming goal
In heav'n of my probation under-ground :
Up from the mighty Titan with his feet
Touching the centre, and his forest-hair
Entangling with the stars ; whose middle womb
Of two self-buried lives has been the tomb ;
At last, my year's apprenticeship complete,
I rise to try my cunning, and as one
Arm'd in the dark who challenges the sun.
You heav'ns, for me your azure brows with cloud
Contract, or to your inmost depth unshroud :
Thou sapphire-floating counterpart below,
Obsequious of my moon-like magic flow :
For me you mountains fall, you valleys rise,
With all your brooks and fountains far with-
drawn ;
You forests shudder underneath my sighs ;
And whatsoever breathes in earth and skies ;
You birds that on the bough salute the dawn ;

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN ACT III

And you wild creatures that through wood and
glen

Do fly the hunter, or the hunter flies ;
Yea, man himself, most terrible to men ;
Troop to my word, about my footstep fawn ;
Yea, ev'n you spirits that by viewless springs
Move and perplex the tangled web of things,
Wherever in the darkest crypt you lurk
Of nature, nature to my purpose work ;
That not the dead material element,
But complicated with the life beyond
Up to pure spirit, shall my charm resent,
And take the motion of my magic wand ;
And, once more shaken on her ancient throne,
In me old nature a new master own.

Lucifer. But how is this, Cipriano, that misled
By hasty passion you affront the day
Ere master of the art of darkness ?

Cipr. Nay,
By that same blazing witness overhead
Standing in heav'n to mark the time foretold,
Since first imprison'd in this mountain-hold
My magic so preluded with the dread
Preliminary kingdom of the dead,
That not alone the womb of general earth
Which Death has crowded thick with second
birth,

But monuments with marble lips composed
To dream till doomsday, suddenly disclosed,
And woke their sleepers centuries too soon
To stare upon the old remember'd moon.

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Wearied of darkness, I will see the day :
Sick of the dead, the living will assay :
And if the ghastly year I have gone through
Bear half its promised harvest, will requite
With a too warm good-morrow the long night
That one cold living heart consign'd me to.

Luc. Justina !

Cipr. Ay, Justina : now no more
Obsequiously sighing at the door
That never open'd, nor the heart of stone
On which so long I vainly broke my own ;
But of her soul and body, when and how
I will, I claim the forfeit here and now.

Luc. Enough : the hour is come ; do thou
 design
The earth with circle, pentagram, and trine ;
The wandering airs with incantation twine ;
While through her sleep-enchanted sense I shake
The virgin constancy I cannot break.

(Clouds roll before the mountain, hiding CIPRIANO.)

Thou nether realm of darkness and despair,
Whose fire-enthronèd emperor am I ;
Where many-knotted till the word they lie,
Your subtlest spirits at the word untie,
And breathe them softly to this upper air ;
With subtle soft insinuation fair
Of foul result encompass and attain
The chastity of the rebellious saint
Who dares the Spirit of this world defy.
Spirits that do shapeless float

In darkness as in light the mote,
At my summons straightway take
Likeness of the fairest make,
And, her sleeping sense about
Seal'd from all the world without,
Through the bolted eyelids creep ;
Entheatre the walls of sleep
With an Eden where the sheen
Of the leaf and flower between
All is freshest, yet with Eve's
Apple peeping through the leaves ;
Through whose magic mazes may
Melancholy fancy stray
Till she lose herself, or into
Softer passion melt away :
While the scent-seducing rose
Gazing at her as she goes
With her turning as she turns,
Into her his passion burns ;
While the wind among the boughs
Whispers half-remember'd vows ;
Nightingale interpreters
Into their passion translate hers ;
And the murmurs of a stream
Down one current draw the dream.
While for hidden chorus, I
At her dreaming ear supply
Such a comment as her own
Heart to nature's shall atone :
Till the secret influence
Of the genial season even

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Holy blood that sets to heaven
Draws into the lower sense ;
Till array'd in angel guise
Earthly memories surprise
Ev'n the virgin soul, and win
Holy pity's self to sin.

(The clouds roll away, and discover JUSTINA asleep in her chamber.)

Lucifer (at her ear). Come forth, come forth,
Justina, come ; for scared
Winter is vanish'd, and victorious Spring
Has hung her garland on the boughs he bared :
Come forth ; there is a time for everything.

Justina (in her sleep). That was my father's voice—come, Livia—

My mantle—oh, not want it?—well then, come.

Luc. Ay, come abroad, Justina ; it is Spring ;
The world is not with sunshine and with leaf
Renew'd to be the tomb of ceaseless grief ;
Come forth : there is a time for everything.

Just. How strange it is—

I think the garden never look'd so gay
As since my father died.

Luc. Ev'n so : for now,
Returning with the summer wind, the hours
Dipp'd in the sun re-dress the grave with flowers,
And make new wreaths for the survivor's brow ;
Whose spirit not to share were to refuse
The power that all creating, all renews
With self-diffusive warmth, that, with the sun's,

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN ACT III

At this due season through creation runs,
Nor in the first creation more express'd
Than by the singing builder of the nest
That waves on this year's leaf, or by the rose
That underneath them in his glory glows ;
Life's fountain, flower, and crown ; without
 whose giving

Life itself were not, nor, without, worth living.

Chorus of Voices. Life's fountain, flower, and
 crown ; without whose giving
Life itself were not, nor, without, worth living.

Song.

Who that in his hour of glory
 Walks the kingdom of the rose,
And misapprehends the story
 Which through all the garden blows ;
Which the southern air who brings
It touches, and the leafy strings
 Lightly to the touch respond ;
And nightingale to nightingale
 Answering a bough beyond—
Chorus. Nightingale to nightingale
 Answering a bough beyond.

Just. These serenaders—singing their old songs
Under one's window—

Luc. Ay, and if nature must decay or cease
Without it ; what of nature's masterpiece ?
Not in her outward lustre only, but
Ev'n in the soul within the jewel shut ;
What but a fruitless blossom ; or a lute
Without the hand to touch it music-mute :

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Incense that will not rise to heav'n unfired ;
By that same vernal spirit uninspired
That sends the blood up from the heart, and speaks
In the rekindled lustre of the cheeks ?

Chorus. Life's fountain, flower, and crown ;
 without whose giving
Life itself were not, nor, without, worth living.

Song.

Lo the golden Girasolé,
That to him by whom she burns,
Over heaven slowly, slowly,
As he travels ever turns ;
And beneath the wat'ry main
When he sinks, would follow fain,
Follow fain from west to east,
And then from east to west again.

Chorus. Follow would from west to east,
And then from east to west again.

Just. He beckon'd us, and then again was
 gone ;
Oh look ! under the tree there, Livia—
Where he sits—reading—scholar-like indeed !—
With the dark hair that was so white upon
His shoulder—but how deadly pale his face !—
And, statue-still-like, the quaint evergreen
Up and about him creeps, as one has seen
Round some old marble in a lonely place.

Luc. Ay, look on that—for, as the story runs,
Ages ago, when all the world was young,
That ivy was a nymph of Latium,

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN ACT III

Whose name was Hedera : so passing fair
 That all who saw fell doting on her ; but
 Herself so icy-cruel, that her heart
 Froze dead all those her eyes had set on fire.
 Whom the just God who walk'd that early world,
 By right-revenging metamorphosis
 Changed to a thing so abject-amorous,
 She grovels on the ground to catch at any
 Wither'd old trunk or sapling, in her way :
 So little loved as loathed, for strangling those
 Round whom her deadly-deathless arms enclose.

Song.

So for her who having lighted
 In another heart the fire,
 Then shall leave it unrequited
 In its ashes to expire :
 After her that sacrifice
 Through the garden burns and cries ;
 In the sultry breathing air :
 In the flowers that turn and stare—
 ‘What has she to do among us,
 Falsely wise and frozen fair ?’

Luc. Listen, Justina, listen and beware.

Just. Again ! That voice too ?—But you
 know my father
 Is ill—is in his chamber—
 How sultry 'tis—the street is full and close—
 Let us get home—why do they stare at us ?
 And murmur something—‘ Cipriano ?—Where
 ‘ Is Cipriano ?—lost to us—some say,

SCENE I THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

'And to himself,—self-slain—mad— Where is
he?'

Alas, alas, I know not—

Luc. Come and see—

Justina (waking). Mercy upon me ! Who is this ?

Luc. Justina, your good angel,
Who, moved by your relenting to the sighs
Of one who lost himself for your disdain,
Will lead you to the cavern where he lies
Subsisting on the memory of your eyes—

Fust. 'Twas all a dream!—

Luc. That dreaming you fulfil.

Just. Oh, no, with all my waking soul
renounce.

Luc. But, dreaming or awake, the soul is one,
And the deed purposed in Heaven's eyes is done.

Just. Oh Christ! I cannot argue—I can
pray,

Christ Jesus, oh, my Saviour, Jesu Christ !

Let not hell snatch away from Thee the soul

Thou gav'st Thy life to save !—Livia !—Livia !

Enter LIVIA.

Where is my father? where am I? Oh, I know—

In my own chamber—and my father—oh !—

But, Livia, who was it that but now

Was here—here in my very chamber—

Livia.

Madam ?

Just. You let none in ? oh, no ! I know it—
but

Some one there was—here—now—as I cried
out—

A dark, strange figure—

Livia. My child, compose yourself ;
No one has come, or gone, since you were laid
In your noon-slumber. This was but a dream.
The air is heavy ; and the melancholy
You live alone with since your father's death—

Just. A dream, a dream indeed—oh Livia,
That leaves his pressure yet upon my arm—
And that without the immediate help of God
I had not overcome—Oh, but the soul,
The soul must be unsteady in the faith,
So to be shaken even by a dream.
Oh, were my father here ! But he's at rest—
I know he is—upon his Saviour's breast ;
And—who knows !—may have carried up my
cries

Ev'n to His ear upon whose breast he lies !
Give me my mantle, Livia ; I'll to the church ;
Where if but two or three are met in prayer
Together, He has promised to be there—
And I shall find him.

Livia. Oh, take care, take care !
You know the danger—in broad daylight too—
Or take me with you.

Just. And endanger two ?
Best serve us both by keeping close at home,
Praying for me as I will pray for you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

SCENE II.—*Entrance to the mountain cavern.*

CIPRIANO, *in a magician's dress, with wand, &c.*

What ! do the powers of earth, and air, and hell,
Against their upstart emperor rebel ?
Lo, in obedience to the rubric dark
The dusky cheek of earth with mystic mark
Of pentagram and circle I have lined,
And hung my fetters on the viewless wind,
And yet the star of stars, for whose ascent
I ransack all the lower firmament,
In unapparent darkness lags behind :
Whom once again with adjuration new
Of all the spirits whom these signs subdue,
Whether by land or water, night or day,
Whether awake or sleeping, yea or nay,
I summon now before me.—

Enter slowly a veiled Figure of JUSTINA.

The Figure. What dark spell
From the sequester'd sadness of my cell,
Through the still garden, through the giddy
 street,
And up the solitary mountain-side,
Leads me with sleep-involuntary feet?—

Cipr. 'Tis she, as yet though clouded !—oh
divine

Justina !—

The Figure. Cipriano!—

ACT III

Cipr.

At last here,

The Figure (unveiling a skull and vanishing

Behold, the World and its delight

Cipr. (*flinging down his Wand*). Lucifer !

Luc.

My son !

Cipr. Quick ! With a word—

Luc.

How now?—

Cipr.

With a word—at once—

With all your might—

Luc.

Well, what with it?—

Cipr.

The charm—

Shatter it ! shatter it, I say !—Is't done ?

Is't vanish'd—

Luc.

What has thus unsensed you ?

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. Oh !—
 You know it—saw it—did it—
Luc. Come—be a man :
 What, scared with a mere death's-head ?
Cipr. Death's, indeed !—
Luc. What was it more ?—
Cipr. Justina's seeming self—
 After what solitary labour wrought,
 And after what re-iterated charms,
 Step by step here in all her beauty brought
 Within the very circle of these arms,
 Then to death's grisly lineaments resign'd
 Slipp'd through them, and went wailing down
 the wind
 ' Ashes and dust and ashes '—
 Nay, nay, pretend not that the fault was mine—
 The written incantation line by line
 I mutter'd, and the mystic figure drew ;
 You only are to blame—you only, you,
 Cajoling me, or by your own cajoled,
 Bringing me fleshless death for the warm life
 For which my own eternal life is sold.
Luc. You were too rash,—I warn'd you, and
 if not,
 Who thinks at a first trial to succeed ?
 Another time—
Cipr. No, no ! No more of it !
 What, have I so long dabbled with the dead,
 That all I touch turns to corruption ?
 Was it indeed herself—her living self—
 Till underneath my deadly contact slain ;

Or having died during the terrible year
 I have been living worse than dead with you,
 What I beheld not she, but what she was,
 Out of the tomb that only owns my spell
 Drawn into momentary lifeliness
 To mock me with the phantom of a beauty
 Whose lineaments the mere impalpable air
 Let in upon disfeatures—Was it she?

Luc. She lives, and shall be yours.

Cipr.

Not if herself,

In more than all her living beauty breathing,
 Came to efface that deadly counterfeit.—
 Oh, what have I been doing all this while,
 From which I wake as from a guilty dream,
 But with my guilt's accomplice at my side
 To prove its terrible reality?
 Where were my ears, my eyes, my senses? where
 The mother-wit which serves the common boor,
 Not to resent that black academy,
 Mess-mating with dead men and living fiends,
 And not to know no good could come of it?—
 My better self—the good that in me grew
 By nature, and by good instruction till'd,
 Under your shadow turn'd to poisonous weed;
 And ev'n the darker art you bribed me with,
 To master, if by questionable ways,
 The power I sigh'd for in my better days,
 So little reaching to the promised height,
 As sinking me beneath the lowest fiend,
 Who, for the inestimable self I sold,
 Pays the false self you made me with false gold!

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Luc. When will blind fury, falling foul of all,
Light where it should? Suppose a fault so far,
As knowledge working through unpractised
hands

Might fail at first encounter; all men know
How a mere sand will check a vast machine;
And in these complicated processes
An agency so insignificant
As to be wholly overlook'd it was
At the last moment foil'd us.

Cipr. But she lives!
Lives—from your clutches saved, and saved from
mine—

Ev'n from that only shadow of my guilt
That could have touch'd her, saved—unguilty
shame,

That now is left with all the guilt to me.
Oh that I knew a God in all the heav'ns
To thank, or ev'n of Tartarus—ev'n thee,
Thee would I bless, whatever power it be
That with that shadow saved her, and mock'd
me

Back to my better senses. If not she,
What was it?

Luc. What you saw.

Cipr. A phantom?

Luc. Well,

A phantom.

Cipr. But how raised?

Luc. What if by her?

She is a sorcerer as her father was.

ACT III

Cipr. A sorcerer ! She a sorcerer ! oh, black
lie

To witness your defeat ! and, were it true,
Oh mighty doctor to be foil'd at last
By a mere woman !—If a sorcerer,
Then of a sort you deal not with, nor hell—
And ev'n Olympus likes the sport too well—
Raising a phantom not to draw me down
To deeper sin, but with its ghastly face
And hollow voice both telling of the tomb
They came from, warning me of what complexion
Were all the guilty wishes of this world.
But let the phantom go where gone it is—
Not of what mock'd me, but what saved herself,
By whatsoever means—ay, what was it,
That pitiful agency you told me of
So insignificant, as overlook'd
At the last moment thwarted us ?

Luc.

What matter ?

When now provided for, and which when told
You know not—

Cipr. Which I will be told to know—
For as one ris'n from darkness tow'rd the light,
A veil seems clearing from before my sight—
She is a sorcerer, and of the kind
That old Lisandro died suspected of?—
Oh cunning doctor, to outwit yourself,
Outwitted as you have been, and shall be
By him who if your devilish magic fail'd
To teach its purposed mischief,
Thus on his teacher turns it back in full

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

To force him to confess the counter-power
That foil'd us both.

(He catches up his wand.)

Luc. Poor creature that you are !
Did not the master from his scholars hold
One sleight of hand that masters all the rest,
What magic needed to compel the devil
To convict those who find him out too late ?
Yet to increase your wrath by leaving it
Blind in the pit your guilt consigns you to,
I shall not answer—

Cipr. Then if your own hell
Cannot enforce you ; by that Unknown Power
That saved Justina from your fangs, although
Yourself you cannot master, if you know,
I charge you name him to me !—

Luc. (after a great flash of lightning, and thunder).

Jesus Christ !

Cipr. (after a pause). Ev'n so !—Christ Jesus

—Jesus Christ—the same

That poor Lisandro died suspected of,
And I had heard and read of with the rest
But to despise, in spite of all the blood
By which the chosen few their faith confess'd—
The prophet-carpenter of Nazareth,
Poor, persecuted, buffeted, reviled,
Spit upon, crown'd with thorns, and crucified
With thieves—the Son of God—the Son of man,
Whose shape He took to teach them how to
live,

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN ACT III

And doff'd upon the cross to do away
The sin and death you and your devil-deities
Had heap'd on him from the beginning ?

Luc. Yea !—

Cipr. Of the one sun of Deity one ray
That was before the world was, and that made
The world and all that is within it ?

Luc. Yea !

Cipr. Eternal and Almighty then : and yet
Infinite Centre as he is of all
The all but infinite universe he made,
With eyes to see me plotting, and with ear
To hear one solitary creature pray,
From one dark corner of his kingdom ?

Luc. Yea !

Cipr. All one, all when, all where, all good,
all mighty,
All eye, all ear, all self-integrity—
Methinks this must be He of whom I read
In Greek and Roman sages dimly guess'd,
But never until now fully confess'd
In this poor carpenter of Nazareth,
With poor Justina for his confessor—
And now by thee—by thee—once and again
Spite of thyself—for answer me you must,
Convicted at the bar of your own thunder—
Is this the God for whom I sought so long
In mine own soul and those of other men,
Who from the world's beginning till to-day
Groped or were lost in utter darkness ?

Luc. Yea !

SCENE II THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. Enough ; and your confession shall be mine—

Luc. And to like purpose ; to believe, confess,

And tremble, in the everlasting fire
Prepared for all who Him against their will
Confess, and in their deeds deny him—

Cipr. Oh,

Like a flogg'd felon after full confession
Released at last !

Luc. To bind you mine for ever.

Cipr. Thine ! What art thou ?

Luc. The god whom you must worship.

Cipr. There is no God but one, whom you
and I

Alike acknowledge, as in Jesus Christ
Reveal'd to man. What other god art thou ?

Luc. Antichrist ! He that all confessing
Christ

Confess ; Satan, the Serpent, the first Tempter,
Who tempted the first Father of mankind
With the same offer to a like result
That I have tempted thee with ; yea, had power
Even Him in his humanity to tempt,
Though Him in vain ; the god of this world ; if
False god, true devil ; true angel as I was,
Son of the morning, Lucifer, who fell
(As first I told thee, had'st thou ears to hear)
For my rebellion down from heaven to hell
More terrible than any Tartarus,
Where over those who fell with me I reign.

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN ACT III

Whom, though with them bound in the self-
same chain

Of everlasting torment, God allows
To reach my hands out of my prison-house
On all who like me from their God rebel,
As thou hast done.

Cipr. Not when for God I knew him.

Luc. Ay, but who but for pride and lust like
mine

Had known Him sooner—

Cipr. And had sooner known
But for thy lying gods that shut Him out.

Luc. Which others much less wise saw
through before.

Cipr. All happy they then ! But all guilty I,
Yet thus far guiltless of denying Him
Whom even thou confessest.

Luc. But too late—
Already mine, if not so sworn before,
Yet by this bond—

Cipr. For service unperform'd !
But unperform'd, or done, and payment due,
I fling myself and all my debt on Him
Who died to undertake them—

Luc. He is the Saviour of the innocent,
Not of the guilty.

Cipr. Who alone need saving !

Luc. Damnation is the sinner's just award,
And He is just.

Cipr. And being just, will not
For wilful blindness tax the want of light :

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

And All-good as Almighty, and therefore
 As merciful as just, will not renounce
 Ev'n the worst sinner who confesses Him,
 And testifies confession with his blood.
 Which, not to waste a moment's argument,
 Too like the old logic that I lost my life in,
 And hangs for ever dead upon the cross ;
 I will forthwith shout my confession,
 Into the general ear of Antioch,
 And from the evidence of thine own mouth,
 Not thee alone, but all thy lying gods,
 Convict ; and you convicting before God,
 Myself by man's tribunal judged and damn'd,
 Trust by my own blood mixing with the tide
 That flow'd for me from the Redeemer's side,
 From those few damning drops to wash me free
 That bound me thine for ever—

Lucifer (seizing him). Take my answer—

Cipriano (escaping). Oh, Saviour of Justina,
 save Thou me ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Hall of Justice in Antioch.*

AURELIO, FABIO, SENATORS, &c., just risen from
Council.

Aurelio. You have done well indeed ; the
 very Church
 These Christians flock'd to for safe blasphemy
 Become the very net to catch them in.
 How many, think you ?

ACT III

Fabio. Not so many, sir,

Aur. Among the rest this girl, Lisandro's daughter,

As you and I know, Fabio, to our cost :
But now convicted and condemn'd is safe
From troubling us or Antioch any more.
Come, such good service asks substantial thanks ;
What shall it be ?

Fabio. No other, if you please,

Aur. As my own Lelio, and for a like cause ;

This cursèd woman whose fair face and foul
Behaviour was the city's talk and trouble,
Now proved a sorceress, is well condemn'd ;
Not only for my sake and Fabio's,
But for all Antioch, whose better youth
She might, like ours, have carried after her
Through lust and duel into blasphemy.

CENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Re-enter FABIO with LELIO and FLORO.

Lelio. Once more, sir, at your feet—

Aur. Up, both of you.

Floro and Lelio, you understand
What I have done was of no testy humour,
But for three several sakes—
Your own, your fathers', and the city's peace.
Henceforward, by this seasonable use
Of public law for private purpose check'd,
Your fiery blood to better service turn.
Take hands, be friends; the cause of quarrel
gone—

Lelio. The cause of quarrel gone !—

Aur. Be satisfied ;

You will know better by and bye ; meanwhile
Taking upon my word that so it is ;
Which were it not indeed, you were not here
To doubt.

Floro (aside). Oh flimsy respite of revenge !—

Aur. And now the business of the day well
crown'd

With this so happy reconciliation,
You and I, Fabio, to our homes again,
Our homes once more, replenish'd with the
peace

We both have miss'd so long.—What noise is
that ?

(Cries without). Stop him ! A madman ! Stop
him !—

ACT III

Aur. What is it, Fabio ?

Fabio.

One like mad indeed,

In a strange garb, with flaring eyes, and hair
That streams behind him as he flies along,
Dragging a cloud of rabble after him.

Aur. This is no place for either—shut the doors,

and post the soldiers to keep peace without—

(Cries without). Stop him!

Floro and Lelio.

'Tis Cipriano !—

Aur.

Cipriano !—

Enter CIPRIANO.

Cipriano. Ay, Cipriano, Cipriano's self,

Heretofore mad as you that call him so,

Now first himself.—Noble Aurelio,

Who sway'st the sword of Rome in Antioch

And you, companions of my youthful love

And letters ; you grave senate ranged above ;

And you whose murmuring multitude below

Do make the marble hall of justice rock

From base to capital—hearken unto me :

Yes, I am Cipriano : I am he

So long and strangely lost, now strangely found—

The famous doctor of your schools, renown'd

Not Antioch only but the world about

For learning's prophet-paragon forsooth ;

Who long pretending to provide the truth

For other men in fields where never true

Wheat, but a crop of mimic darnel grew,

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Reap'd nothing for himself but doubt, doubt,
doubt.

Then 'twas that looking with despair and ruth
Over the blasted harvest of my youth,
I saw Justina : saw, and put aside
The barren Pallas for a mortal bride
Divinelier fair than she is feign'd to be :
But in whose deep-entempled chastity,
That look'd down holy cold upon my fire,
Lived eyes that but re-doubled vain desire.
Till this new passion, that more fiercely prey'd
Upon the wither'd spirit of dismay'd
Ambition, swiftly by denial blew
To fury that, transcending all control,
I made away the ruin of my soul
To one whom no chance tempest at my feet
In the mid tempest of temptation threw.
Who blinding me with the double deceit
Of loftier aspiration and more low
Than mortal or immortal man should owe
Fulfill'd for me, myself for his I bound ;
With him and death and darkness closeted
In yonder mountain, while about its head
The sun his garland of the seasons wound,
In the dark school of magic I so read,
And wrought to such a questionable power
The black forbidden art I travail'd in,
That though the solid mountain from his base
With all his forest I might counterplace,
I could not one sweet solitary flower
Of beauty to my magic passion win,

Because her God was with her in that hour
 To guard her virtue more than mountain-fast :
 That only God, whom all my learning past
 Fail'd to divine, but from the very foe
 That would have kept Him from me come to
 know

I come to you, to witness and make known :
 One God, eternal, absolute, alone ;
 Of whom Christ Jesus—Jesus Christ, I say—
 And, Antioch, open all your ears to-day—
 Of that one Godhead one authentic ray,
 Vizor'd awhile his Godhead in man's make,
 Man's sin and death upon Himself to take ;
 For man made man ; by man unmade and slain
 Upon the cross that for mankind He bore—
 Dead—buried—and in three days ris'n again
 To His hereditary glory, bearing
 All who with Him on earth His sorrow sharing
 With Him shall dwell in glory evermore.
 And all the gods I worship'd heretofore,
 And all that you now worship and adore,
 From thundering Zeus to cloven-footed Pan,
 But lies and idols, by the hand of man
 Of brass and stone—fit emblems as they be,
 With ears that hear not ; eyes that cannot see ;
 And multitude where only One can be—
 From man's own lewd imagination built ;
 By that same devil held to that old guilt
 Who tempted me to new. To whom indeed
 If with my sin and blood myself I fee'd
 For ever his—that bond of sin and blood

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

I trust to cancel in the double flood
 Of baptism past, and the quick martyrdom
 To which with this confession I am come.
 Oh delegate of Cæsar to devour
 The little flock of Jesus Christ ! Behold
 One lost sheep just admitted to the fold
 Through the pure stream that rolling down the
 same

Mountain in which I sinn'd, and as I came
 By holy hands administer'd, to-day
 Shall wash the mountain of my sin away.
 Lo, here I stand for judgment ; by the blow
 Of sudden execution, or such slow
 Death as the devil shall, to maintain his lies,
 By keeping life alive in death, devise.
 Hack, rack, dismember, burn—or crucify,
 Like Him who died to find me ; Him that I
 Will die to find ; for whom, with whom, to die
 Is life ; and life without, and all his lust,
 But dust and ashes, dust and ashes, dust—

(He falls senseless to the ground.)

Aurelio (after a long pause). So public and
 audacious blasphemy

Demands as instant vengeance. Wretched man,
 Arise and hear your sentence—

Lelio.

Oh, sir, sir !

You speak to ice and marble—Cipriano !
 Oh look'd for long, and best for ever lost !
 But he is mad—he knows not what he says—
 You would not, surely, on a madman visit
 What only sane confession makes a crime ?

ACT III

Aur. I never know how far such blasphemy,
Which seems to spread like wild-fire in the world,
Be fault or folly : only this I know,
I dare not disobey the stern decree
That Cæsar makes my office answer for.
Especially when one is led away
Of such persuasion and authority,
Still drawing after him the better blood
Of Antioch, to better or to worse.

Lelio. Cipriano ! Cipriano ! Yet, pray the
 gods
 He be past hearing me !

Fabio (to *Aurelio*). Sir, in your ear—
Justina's hour is come ; and through the room
Where she was doom'd, she passes to her doom.

Aur. Let us be gone ; they must not look
on her

Nor know she is to die until 'to die'
Be past predicament. Here let her wait,
Till he she drew along with her to sin
Revive to share with her its punishment.
Come, Lelio—come, Floro—be assured
I loved and honour'd this man as yourselves
Have honour'd him—but now—

Lelio. Nay, sir, but—

Aur. May,

Not I, but Cæsar, Lelio. Come away.

[*Exeunt.* Then JUSTINA is brought in by soldiers, and left alone.]

Just. All gone—all silence—and the sudden stroke,

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Whose only mercy I besought, delay'd
To make my pang the fiercer.—What is here ?—
Dead ?—By the doom perhaps I am to die,
And laid across the threshold of the road
To trip me up with terror—Yet not so,
If but the life, once lighted here, has flown
Up to the living Centre that my own
Now trembles to !—God help him, breathing
still ?—

—Cipriano !—

Cipr. Ay, I am ready—I can rise—
Is my time come ?—Oh, God ?
Have I repented and confess'd too late,
And this terrible witness of my crime
Stands at the door of death from which it came
To draw me deeper—

Just. Cipriano !

Cipr. Yet

Not yet disfeatured—nor the voice—
Oh, if not *That*—this time unsummon'd—come
To take me with you where I raised you from—
Once more—once more—assure me !—

Justina (taking his hand). Cipriano !—

Cipr. And this, too, surely, is a living hand :
Though cold, oh, cold indeed—but yet, but yet,
Not dust and ashes, dust and ashes—

Just. No—

But soon to be—

Cipr. But soon—but soon to be—
But not as then ?—

Just. I understand you not—

Cipr. I scarce myself—I must have been
asleep—

But now not dreaming?

Just. No, not dreaming.

Cipr. No—

This is the judgment-hall of Antioch,
In which—I scarcely mind how long ago—
Is sentence pass'd on me?—

Just. This is indeed
The judgment-hall of Antioch ; but why
You here, and what the judgment you await,
I know not—

Cipr. No.—But stranger yet to me
Why you yourself, Justina,—Oh my God !—
What, all your life long giving God his due,
Is treason unto Cæsar?—

Just. Ay, Cipriano—
Against his edict having crept inside
God's fold with that good Shepherd for my
guide,
My Saviour Jesus Christ !

Cipr. My Saviour too,
And Shepherd—oh, the only good and true
Shepherd and Saviour—

Just. You confess Him ! *You*
Confess Him, Cipriano !

Cipr. With my blood :
Which being all to that confession pledged,
Now waits but to be paid.

Just. Oh, we shall die,
And go to heav'n together !

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cipr. Amen ! Amen !—
And yet—

Just. You do not fear—and yet no shame—
What I have faced so long, that present dread
Is almost lost in long anticipation—

Cipr. I fear not for this mortal. Would to God
This guilty blood by which in part I trust
To pay the forfeit of my soul with Heav'n
Would from man's hand redeem the innocence
That such atonement needs not.

Just. Oh, to all
One faith and one atonement—

Cipr. But if both,
If both indeed must perish by the doom
That one deserves and cries for—Oh, Justina,
Who upward ever with the certain step
Of faith hast follow'd unrepres'd by sin ;
Now that thy foot is almost on the floor
Of heav'n, pray Him who opens thee the door,
Let with thee one repenting sinner in !

Just. What more am I ? And were I close
to Him
As he upon whose breast he lean'd on here,
No intercessor but Himself between
Himself and the worst sinner of us all—
If but repenting we believe in Him.

Cipr. I do believe—I do repent—my faith
Have sign'd in water, and will seal in blood—

Just. I have no other hope, but, in that, all.

Cipr. Oh hope that almost is accomplishment,
Believing all with nothing to repent !

ACT III

Just. Oh, none so good as not to need—so bad
As not to find, His mercy. If you doubt
Because of your long dwelling in the darkness
To which the light was folly—oh 'twas shown
To the poor shepherd long before the wise ;
And if to me, as simple—oh, not mine,
Not mine, oh God ! the glory—nor ev'n theirs
From whom I drew it, and—Oh, Cipriano,
Methinks I see them bending from the skies
To take me up to them !

Cipr. Whither could I
But into heaven's remotest corner creep,
Where I might only but discern thee, lost
With those you love in glory—

Just. Hush ! hush ! hush !
 These are wild words—if I so speak to one
 So wise, while I am nothing—
 But as you know—Oh, do not think of me,
 But Him, into whose kingdom all who come
 Are as His angels—

Cipr. Ay, but to come there !—
Where if all intercession, even thine,
Be vain—you say so—yet before we pass
The gate of death together, as we shall,—
If then to part—for ever, and for ever—
Unless with your forgiveness—

Just. I forgive !
Still I, and I, again ! Oh, Cipriano,
Pardon and intercession both alike
With Him alone ; and had I to forgive—
Did not He pray upon the cross for those

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Who slew Him—as I hope to do on mine
For mine—He bids us bless our enemies
And persecutors ; which I think, I think,
You were not, Cipriano—why do you shudder ?—
Save in pursuit of that—if vain to me,
Now you know all—

Cipr. I now know all—but you
Not that, which asking your forgiveness for,
I dare not name to you, for fear the hand
I hold as anchor-fast to, break away,
And I drive back to hell upon a blast
That roar'd behind me to these very doors,
But stopt—ev'n in the very presence stopt,
That most condemns me his.

Just. Alas, alas,
Again all wild to me. The time draws short—
Look not to me, but Him tow'rd whom alone
Sin is, and pardon comes from—

Cipr. Oh, Justina,
You know not how enormous is my sin—

Just. I know, not as His mercy infinite.

Cipr. To Him—to thee—to Him through
thee—

Just. 'Tis written,
Not all the sand of ocean, nor the star
Of heav'n so many as His mercies are.

Cipr. What ! ev'n for one who, mad with
pouring vows
Into an unrelenting human ear,
Gave himself up to Antichrist—the Fiend—
Though then for such I knew him not—to gain

THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN ACT III

By darkness all that love had sought in vain !
 —Speak to me—if but that hereafter I
 Shall never, never, hear your voice again—
 Speak to me—

Just. (*after a long pause*).—By the Saviour on
 His cross

A sinner hung who but at that last hour
 Cried out to be with Him ; and was with Him
 In Paradise ere night.

Cipr. But was his sin
 As mine enormous ?—

Just. Shall your hope be less,
 Offering yourself for Christ's sake on that cross
 Which the other only suffer'd for his sin ?
 Oh, when we come to perish, side by side,
 Look but for Him between us crucified,
 And call to Him for mercy ; and, although
 Scarlet, your sin shall be as white as snow !

Cipr. Ev'n as you speak, yourself, though yet
 yourself,
 In that full glory that you saw reveal'd
 With those you love transfigured, and your voice
 As from immeasurable altitude
 Descending, tell me that, my shame and sin
 Quench'd in the death that opens wide to you
 The gate, ev'n this great sinner shall pass through,
 With Him, with them, with thee !—

Just. Glory to God !—
 Oh blest assurance on the very verge
 That death is swallow'd up in victory !
 And hark ! the step of death is at the door—

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Courage !—Almighty God through Jesus Christ
Pardon your sins and mine, and as a staff
Guide and support us through the terrible pass
That leads us to His rest !—

Cipr. My own beloved !
Whose hand—Oh let it be no sin to say it !—
Is as the staff that God has put in mine—
To lead me through the shadow—yet ev'n now—
Ev'n now—at this last terrible moment—
Which, to secure my being with thee, thee
Forbids to stand between my Judge and me,
And in a few more moments, soul and soul
May read each other as an open scroll—
Yet, wilt thou yet believe me not so vile
To thee, to Him who made thee what thou art,
Till desperation of the only heart
I ever sigh'd for, by I knew not then
How just alienation, drove me down
To that accursèd thing ?

Just. My Cipriano !
Dost thou remember, in the lighter hour—
Then when my heart, although you saw it not,
All the while yearn'd to thee across the gulf
That yet it dared not pass—my telling thee
That only Death, which others disunites,
Should ever make us one ? Behold ! and now
The hour is come, and I redeem my vow.

ACT III

Enter FABIO with Guard, who lead away CIPRIANO and JUSTINA. Manent EUSEBIO, JULIAN, and Citizens.)

Cit. 2. And one so fair !

As others to a marriage festival.

Eusebio. I think

Cit. I. And has found

Cit. 2. And after death, as they believe ; and so
 nus cheerfully to meet it, if the scaffold
 vorce them to eternal union.

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SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

Cit. 1. Oh, love, you know, like time works wonders.

Eusebio.

Well—

Antioch will never see so great a scholar.

Julian. Nor we so courteous a Professor—
I would not see my dear old master die
Were all the wits he lost my legacy.

Citizens talking.

One says that, as they went out hand in hand,

He saw a halo like about the moon

About their head, and moving as they went.

— I saw it—

— Fancy ! fancy !—

— Any how,

They leave it very dark behind them—

Thunder !

— They talk of madness and of blasphemy ;
Neither of these, I think, looking much guilty.

— And he, at any rate, I still maintain,
Least like to be deluded by the folly
For which the new religion is condemn'd.

— Before his madness, certainly : but love
First crazed him, as I told you.

— Well, if mad,
How guilty ?

— Hush ! hush ! These are dangerous words.

— Be not you bitten by this madness,
neighbour.

ACT III

Rome's arm is long.

— Ay, and some say her ears.

— Then, ev'n if bitten, bark not—Thunder
again !

— And what unnatural darkness !

— Well—a storm—

— They say, you know, he was a sorcerer—

Indeed we saw the mystic dress he wore

All wrought with figures of astrology ;

Nay, he confess'd himself as much ; and now

May raise a storm to save—

— There was a crash !

— A bolt has fallen somewhere—the walls
shake—

— And the ground under—

— Save us, Zeus—

Voices.

Away !—

The roof is falling in upon us—

(The wall at the back falls in, and discovers a scaffold with CIPRIANO and JUSTINA dead, and LUCIFER above them.)

Lucifer.

Stay !—

And hearken to what I am doom'd to tell.

I am the mighty minister of hell

You mis-call heav'n, and of the hellish crew

Of those false gods you worship for the True ;

Who, to revenge *her* treason to the blind

Idolatry that has hoodwinked mankind,

And *his*, whose halting wisdom after-knew

What her diviner virtue fore-divined,

SCENE III THE MIGHTY MAGICIAN

By devilish plot and artifices thought
Each of them by the other to have caught ;
But, thwarted by superior will, those eyes
That, by my fuel fed, had been a flame
To light them both to darkness down, became
As stars to lead together to the skies,
By such a doom as expiates his sin,
And her pure innocence lets sooner in
To that eternal bliss where, side by side,
They reign at His right hand for whom they died.
While I, convicted in my own despite
Thus to bear witness to the eternal light
Of which I lost, and they have won the crown
Plunge to my own eternal darkness down.

HÚNDESE.

SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF

A DRAMA

TAKEN FROM

CALDERON'S "LA VIDA ES SUEÑO"

For Calderon's Drama sufficient would seem
The title he chose for it—"Life is a Dream ;"
Two words of the motto now filch'd are enough
For the impudent mixture they label—"Such stuff !"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

BASILIO . . .	<i>King of Poland.</i>
SEGISMUND . . .	<i>his Son.</i>
ASTOLFO . . .	<i>his Nephew.</i>
ESTRELLA . . .	<i>his Niece.</i>
}	
CLOTALDO . . .	<i>a General in Basilio's Service.</i>
ROSAURA . . .	<i>a Muscovite Lady.</i>
FIFE . . .	<i>her Attendant.</i>

CHAMBERLAIN, LORDS IN WAITING, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS,
&c., IN BASILIO'S SERVICE.

*The Scene of the first and third Acts lies on the Polish
frontier : of the second Act, in Warsaw.*

SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A pass of rocks, over which a storm is rolling away, and the sun setting : in the foreground, half way down, a fortress.*

*Enter first from the topmost rock ROSAURA, as from horse-back, in man's attire ; and, after her, FIFE.*¹

Rosaura. There, four-footed Fury, blast-
-engender'd brute, without the wit
Of brute, or mouth to match the bit
Of man—art satisfied at last ?
Who, when thunder roll'd aloof,
Tow'rd the spheres of fire your ears
Pricking, and the granite kicking

¹ As this version of Calderon's drama is not for acting, a higher and wider mountain-scene than practicable may be imagined for Rosaura's descent in the first Act and the soldier's ascent in the last. The bad watch kept by the sentinels who guarded their state-prisoner, together with much else (not all !) that defies sober sense in this wild drama, I must leave Calderon to answer for ; whose audience were not critical of detail and probability, so long as a good story, with strong, rapid, and picturesque action and situation, was set before them.

Into lightning with your hoof,
Among the tempest-shatter'd crags
Shattering your luckless rider
Back into the tempest pass'd ?
There then lie to starve and die,
Or find another Phaeton
Mad-mettled as yourself ; for I,
Wearied, worried, and for-done,
Alone will down the mountain try,
That knits his brows against the sun.

Fife (as to his mule). There, thou mis-begotten
thing,

Long-ear'd lightning, tail'd tornado,
Griffin-hoof-in hurricano,—
(I might swear till I were almost
Hoarse with roaring Asonante)
Who forsooth because your betters
Would begin to kick and fling—
You forthwith your noble mind
Must prove, and kick me off behind,
Tow'rd the very centre whither
Gravity was most inclined.
There where you have made your bed
In it lie ; for, wet or dry,
Let what will for me betide you,
Burning, blowing, freezing, hailing ;
Famine waste you : devil ride you :
Tempest baste you black and blue :—

(To Rosaura.) There ! I think in downright
railing.

I can hold my own with you.

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Ros. Ah, my good Fife, whose merry loyal
pipe,
Come weal, come woe, is never out of tune—
What, you in the same plight too ?

Fife. Ay ;
And madam—sir—hereby desire,
When you your own adventures sing
Another time in lofty rhyme,
You don't forget the trusty squire
Who went with you Don-quixoting.

Ros. Well, my good fellow—to leave Pegasus,
Who scarce can serve us than our horses worse—
They say no one should rob another of
The single satisfaction he has left
Of singing his own sorrows ; one so great,
So says some great philosopher, that trouble
Were worth encount'ring only for the sake
Of weeping over—what perhaps you know
Some poet calls the 'luxury of woe.'

Fife. Had I the poet or philosopher
In place of her that kick'd me off to ride,
I'd test his theory upon his hide.
But no bones broken, madam—sir, I mean ?—

Ros. A scratch here that a handkerchief will
heal—
And you ?—

Fife. A scratch in *quiddity*, or kind :
But not in '*quo*'—my wounds are all behind.
But, as you say, to stop this strain,
Which, somehow, once one's in the vein,
Comes clattering after—there again !—

What are we twain—deuce take't !—we two,
I mean, to do—drench'd through and through—
Oh, I shall choke of rhymes, which I believe
Are all that we shall have to live on here.

Ros. What, is our victual gone too ?—

Fife. Ay, that brute
Has carried all we had away with her,
Clothing, and cate, and all.

Ros. And now the sun,
Our only friend and guide, about to sink
Under the stage of earth.

Fife. And enter Night,
With Capa y Espada—and—pray heav'n !—
With but her lanthorn also.

Ros. Ah, I doubt
To-night, if any, with a dark one—or
Almost burnt out after a month's consumption.
Well ! well or ill, on horseback or afoot,
This is the gate that lets me into Poland ;
And, sorry welcome as she gives a guest
Who writes his own arrival on her rocks
In his own blood—
Yet better on her stony threshold die,
Than live on unrevenge'd in Muscovy.

Fife. Oh what a Soul some women have—I
mean,
Some men—

Ros. Oh, Fife, Fife, as you love me, Fife,
Make yourself perfect in that little part,
Or all will go to ruin !

Fife. Oh, I will,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Please God we find some one to try it on.
But, truly, would not any one believe
Some fairy had exchanged us as we lay
Two tiny foster-children in one cradle ?

Ros. Well, be that as it may, Fife, it reminds
me

Of what perhaps I should have thought before,
But better late than never—You know I love you,
As you, I know, love me, and loyally
Have follow'd me thus far in my wild venture :
Well ! now then—having seen me safe thus far—
Safe if not wholly sound—over the rocks
Into the country where my business lies—
Why should not you return the way we came,
The storm all clear'd away, and, leaving me
(Who now shall want you, though not thank you,
less,

Now that our horses gone) this side the ridge,
Find your way back to dear old home again ;
While I—Come, come !—

What, weeping, my poor fellow ?—

Fife. Leave you here

Alone—my Lady—Lord ! I mean my Lord—

In a strange country—among savages—
Oh, now I know—you would be rid of me
For fear my stumbling speech—

Ros. Oh, no, no, no !—

I want you with me for a thousand sakes
To which that is as nothing—I myself
More apt to let the secret out myself
Without your help at all—Come, come, cheer up !

And if you sing again, 'Come weal, come woe,'
Let it be that ; for we will never part
Until you give the signal.

Fife. 'Tis a bargain.

Ros. Now to begin, then. 'Follow, follow
me,
'You fairy elves that be.'

Fife. Ay, and go on—
Something of 'following darkness like a dream,'
For that we're after.

Ros. No, after the sun ;
Trying to catch hold of his glittering skirts
That hang upon the mountain as he goes.

Fife. Ah, he's himself past catching—as you
spoke
He heard what you were saying, and—just so—
Like some scared water-bird,
As we say in my country, *dōve* below.

Ros. Well, we must follow him as best we may.
Poland is no great country, and, as rich
In men and means, will but few acres spare
To lie beneath her barrier mountains bare.
We cannot, I believe, be very far
From mankind or their dwellings.

Fife. Send it so !
And well provided for man, woman, and beast.
No, not for beast. Ah, but my heart begins
To yearn for her—

Ros. Keep close, and keep your feet
From serving you as hers did.

Fife. As for beasts,

If in default of other entertainment,
We should provide them with ourselves to eat—
Bears, lions, wolves—

Fife. Or else,

Default of other beasts, beastlier men,
Cannibals, Anthropophagi, bare Poles
Who never knew a tailor but by taste.

Ros. Look, look ! Unless my fancy mis-
conceive

With twilight—down among the rocks there,
Fife—

Some human dwelling, surely—

Or think you but a rock torn from the rocks
In some convulsion like to-day's, and perch'd
Quaintly among them in mock-masonry ?

Fife. Most likely that, I doubt.

Ros. No, no—for look !

A square of darkness opening in it—

Fife. Oh,

I don't half like such openings !—

Ros. Like the loom

Of night from which she spins her outer gloom—

Fife. Lord, Madam, pray forbear this tragic
vein

In such a time and place—

Ros. And now again

Within that square of darkness, look ! a light
That feels its way with hesitating pulse,
As we do, through the darkness that it drives
To blacken into deeper night beyond.

Fife. In which could we follow that light's
example,
As might some English Bardolph with his nose,
We might defy the sunset—Hark, a chain !

Ros. And now a lamp, a lamp ! And now
the hand
That carries it.

Fife. Oh, Lord ! that dreadful chain !

Ros. And now the bearer of the lamp ; indeed
As strange as any in Arabian tale,
So giant-like, and terrible, and grand,
Spite of the skin he's wrapt in.

Fife. Why, 'tis his own :
Oh, 'tis some wild man of the woods ; I've heard
They build and carry torches—

Ros. Never Ape
Bore such a brow before the heav'ns as that—
Chain'd as you say too !—

Fife. Oh, that dreadful chain !

Ros. And now he sets the lamp down by his
side,
And with one hand clench'd in his tangled hair
And with a sigh as if his heart would break—

[*During this* SEGISMUND *has entered from*
the fortress, with a torch.

Segismund. Once more the storm has roar'd
itself away,
Splitting the crags of God as it retires ;
But sparing still what it should only blast,
This guilty piece of human handiwork,
And all that are within it. Oh, how oft,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

How oft, within or here abroad, have I
Waited, and in the whisper of my heart
Pray'd for the slanting hand of heav'n to strike
The blow myself I dared not, out of fear
Of that Hereafter, worse, they say, than here,
Plunged headlong in, but, till dismissal waited,
To wipe at last all sorrow from men's eyes,
And make this heavy dispensation clear.
Thus have I borne till now, and still endure,
Crouching in sullen impotence day by day,
Till some such out-burst of the elements
Like this rouses the sleeping fire within ;
And standing thus upon the threshold of
Another night about to close the door
Upon one wretched day to open it
On one yet wretcheder because one more ;—
Once more, you savage heav'ns, I ask of you—
I, looking up to those relentless eyes
That, now the greater lamp is gone below,
Begin to muster in the listening skies ;
In all the shining circuits you have gone
About this theatre of human woe,
What greater sorrow have you gazed upon
Than down this narrow chink you witness still ;
And which, did you yourselves not fore-devise,
You register'd for others to fulfil !

Fife. This is some Laureate at a birth-day ode ;
No wonder we went rhyming.

Ros. Hush ! And now
See, starting to his feet, he strides about
Far as his tether'd steps—

Seg. And if the chain
 You help'd to rivet round me did contract
 Since guiltless infancy from guilt in act ;
 Of what in aspiration or in thought
 Guilty, but in resentment of the wrong
 That wreaks revenge on wrong I never wrought
 By excommunication from the free
 Inheritance that all created life,
 Beside myself, is born to—from the wings
 That range your own immeasurable blue,
 Down to the poor, mute, scale-imprison'd things,
 That yet are free to wander, glide, and pass
 About that under-sapphire, whereinto
 Yourselves transfusing you yourselves englass !

Ros. What mystery is this ?

Fife. Why, the man's mad :
 That's all the mystery. That's why he's chain'd—
 And why—

Seg. Nor Nature's guiltless life alone—
 But that which lives on blood and rapine ; nay,
 Charter'd with larger liberty to slay
 Their guiltless kind, the tyrants of the air
 Soar zenith-upward with their screaming prey,
 Making pure heav'n drop blood upon the stage
 Of under earth, where lion, wolf, and bear,
 And they that on their treacherous velvet wear
 Figure and constellation like your own,¹

¹ 'Some report that they'—(panthers)—'have one marke on the shoulders resembling the moone, growing and decreasing as she doth, sometimes showing a full compasse, and otherwhiles hollowed and pointed with tips like the hornes.'—*Philemon Holland's Pliny*, b. viii. c. 17.

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

With their still living slaughter bound away
Over the barriers of the mountain cage,
Against which one, blood-guiltless, and endued
With aspiration and with aptitude
Transcending other creatures, day by day
Beats himself mad with unavailing rage !

Fife. Why, that must be the meaning of my
mule's

Rebellion—

Ros. Hush !

Seg. But then if murder be
The law by which not only conscience-blind
Creatures, but man too prospers with his kind ;
Who leaving all his guilty fellows free,
Under your fatal auspice and divine
Compulsion, leagued in some mysterious ban
Against one innocent and helpless man,
Abuse their liberty to murder mine :
And sworn to silence, like their masters mute
In heav'n, and like them twirling through the
mask

Of darkness, answering to all I ask,
Point up to them whose work they execute !

Ros. Ev'n as I thought, some poor unhappy
wretch,

By man wrong'd, wretched, unrevenged, as I !
Nay, so much worse than I, as by those chains
Clipt of the means of self-revenge on those
Who lay on him what they deserve. And I,
Who taunted Heav'n a little while ago
With pouring all its wrath upon my head—

Alas ! like him who caught the cast-off husk
Of what another bragg'd of feeding on,
Here's one that from the refuse of my sorrows
Could gather all the banquet he desires !
Poor soul, poor soul !

Fife. Speak lower—he will hear you.

Ros. And if he should, what then ? Why, if
he would,
He could not harm me—Nay, and if he could,
Methinks I'd venture something of a life
I care so little for—

Seg. Who's that ? Clotaldo ? Who are you,
I say,
That, venturing in these forbidden rocks,
Have lighted on my miserable life,
And your own death ?

Ros. You would not hurt me, surely ?

Seg. Not I ; but those that, iron as the chain
In which they slay me with a lingering death,
Will slay you with a sudden—Who are you ?

Ros. A stranger from across the mountain
there,
Who, having lost his way in this strange land
And coming night, drew hither to what seem'd
A human dwelling hidden in these rocks,
And where the voice of human sorrow soon
Told him it was so.

Seg. Ay ? But nearer—nearer—
That by this smoky supplement of day
But for a moment I may see who speaks
So pitifully sweet.

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Fife. Take care ! take care !

Ros. Alas, poor man, that I, myself so helpless,
Could better help you than by barren pity,
And my poor presence—

Seg. Oh, might that be all !
But that—a few poor moments—and, alas !
The very bliss of having, and the dread
Of losing, under such a penalty
As every moment's having runs more near,
Stifles the very utterance and resource
They cry for quickest ; till from sheer despair
Of holding thee, methinks myself would tear
To pieces—

Fife. There, his word's enough for it.

Seg. Oh, think, if you who move about at
will,
And live in sweet communion with your kind,
After an hour lost in these lonely rocks
Hunger and thirst after some human voice
To drink, and human face to feed upon ;
What must one do where all is mute, or harsh,
And ev'n the naked face of cruelty
Were better than the mask it works beneath ?—
Across the mountain then ! Across the mountain !
What if the next world which they tell one of
Be only next across the mountain then,
Though I must never see it till I die,
And you one of its angels ?

Ros. Alas ! Alas !
No angel ! And the face you think so fair,
'Tis but the dismal frame-work of these rocks

That makes it seem so ; and the world I come
from—

Alas, alas, too many faces there
Are but fair vizors to black hearts below,
Or only serve to bring the wearer woe !
But to yourself—If haply the redress
That I am here upon may help to yours.
I heard you tax the heav'ns with ordering,
And men for executing, what, alas !
I now behold. But why, and who they are
Who do, and you who suffer—

Seg. (pointing upwards). Ask of them,
Whom, as to-night, I have so often ask'd,
And ask'd in vain.

Ros.

But surely, surely—

Seg.

Hark !

The trumpet of the watch to shut us in.
Oh, should they find you !—Quick ! Behind the
rocks !

To-morrow—if to-morrow—

Ros. (flinging her sword toward him). Take my
sword !

ROSAURA and FIFE *hide in the rocks ;*

Enter CLOTALDO.

Clotaldo. These stormy days you like to see the
last of

Are but ill opiates, Segismund, I think,
For night to follow : and to-night you seem

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

More than your wont disorder'd. What! A
sword?
Within there!

Enter SOLDIERS with black vizors and torches.

Fife. Here's a pleasant masquerade !

Clo. Whosoever watch this was
Will have to pay head-reckoning. Meanwhile,
This weapon had a wearer. Bring him here,
Alive or dead.

Seg. Clotaldo ! good Clotaldo !—

Clo. (to Soldiers who enclose Segismund; others searching the rocks). You know your duty. *Soldiers* (bringing in Rosaura and Fife). Here are two of them,

Whoever more to follow—

Cló. Who are you,
That in defiance of known proclamation
Are found, at night-fall too, about this place?

Fife. Oh, my Lord, she—I mean he—

Ros. Silence, Fife,

And let me speak for both.—Two foreign men,
To whom your country and its proclamations
Are equally unknown ; and, had we known,
Ourselves not masters of our lawless beasts
That, terrified by the storm among your rocks,
Flung us upon them to our cost.

Fife. My mule—

*Cl*o. Foreigners? Of what country?

Ros. Muscovy.

Clo. And whither bound ?

Ros. Hither—if this be Poland ;
But with no ill design on her, and therefore
Taking it ill that we should thus be stopt
Upon her threshold so uncivilly.

Clo. Whither in Poland ?

Ros. To the capital.

Clo. And on what errand ?

Ros. Set me on the road,
And you shall be the nearer to my answer.

Clo. (*aside*). So resolute and ready to reply,
And yet so young—and—(*aloud*) Well,—
Your business was not surely with the man
We found you with ?

Ros. He was the first we saw,—
And strangers and benighted, as we were,
As you too would have done in a like case,
Accosted him at once.

Clo. Ay, but this sword ?

Ros. I flung it toward him.

Clo. Well, and why ?

Ros. And why ?
But to revenge himself on those who thus
Injuriouslly misuse him.

Clo. So—so—so !
'Tis well such resolution wants a beard—
And, I suppose, is never to attain one.
Well, I must take you both, you and your sword,
Prisoners.

Fife (*offering a cudgel*). Pray take mine, and
welcome, sir ;

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

I'm sure I gave it to that mule of mine
To mighty little purpose.

Ros. Mine you have ;
And may it win us some more kindliness
Than we have met with yet.

Glo. (examining the sword). More mystery !
How came you by this weapon ?

Ros. From my father.

Cl. And do you know whence he?

Ros. Oh, very well :
From one of this same Polish realm of yours,
Who promised a return, should come the chance,
Of courtesies that he received himself
In Muscovy, and left this pledge of it—
Not likely yet, it seems, to be redeem'd.

Clo. (aside). Oh, wondrous chance—or wondrous Providence!

The sword that I myself in Muscovy,
When these white hairs were black, for keepsake
left

Of obligation for a like return
To him who saved me wounded as I lay
Fighting against his country ; took me home ;
Tended me like a brother till recover'd,
Perchance to fight against him once again—
And now my sword put back into my hand
By his—if not his son—still, as so seeming,
By me, as first devoir of gratitude,
To seem believing, till the wearer's self
See fit to drop the ill-dissembling mask.
(*Aloud*) Well, a strange turn of fortune has arrested

The sharp and sudden penalty that else
Had visited your rashness or mischance :
In part, your tender youth too—pardon me,
And touch not where your sword is not to
answer—

Commends you to my care ; not your life only,
Else by this misadventure forfeited ;
But ev'n your errand, which by happy chance,
Chimes with the very business I am on,
And calls me to the very point you aim at.

Ros. The capital ?

Clo. Ay, the capital ; and ev'n
That capital of capitals, the Court :
Where you may plead, and, I may promise,
win

Pardon for this, you say unwilling, trespass,
And prosecute what else you have at heart,
With me to help you forward all I can ;
Provided all in loyalty to those
To whom by natural allegiance
I first am bound to.

Ros. As you make, I take
Your offer : with like promise on my side
Of loyalty to you and those you serve,
Under like reservation for regards
Nearer and dearer still.

Clo. Enough, enough ;
Your hand ; a bargain on both sides. Mean-
while,

Here shall you rest to-night. The break of day
Shall see us both together on the way.

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Ros. Thus then what I for misadventure
blamed,
Directly draws me where my wishes aim'd.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Palace at Warsaw.*

Enter on one side ASTOLFO, *Duke of Muscovy, with his train: and, on the other, the* PRINCESS ESTRELLA, *with hers.*

Astolfo. My royal cousin, if so near in blood,
Till this auspicious meeting scarcely known,
Till all that beauty promised in the bud
Is now to its consummate blossom blown,
Well met at last ; and may—

Estrella. Enough, my Lord,
Of compliment devised for you by some
Court tailor, and, believe me, still too short
To cover the designful heart below.

Ast. Nay, but indeed, fair cousin—

Est. Ay, let Deed
Measure your words, indeed your flowers of speech
Ill with your iron equipage atone ;
Irony indeed, and wordy compliment.

Ast. Indeed, indeed, you wrong me, royal
cousin,
And fair as royal, misinterpreting
What, even for the end you think I aim at,
If false to you, were fatal to myself.

Est. Why, what else means the glittering
steel, my Lord,
That bristles in the rear of these fine words ?
What can it mean, but, failing to cajole,
To fight or force me from my just pretension ?

Ast. Nay, might I not ask ev'n the same of you,
The nodding helmets of whose men at arms
Out-crest the plumage of your lady court ?

Est. But to defend what yours would force
from me.

Ast. Might not I, lady, say the same of mine ?
But not to come to battle, ev'n of words,
With a fair lady, and my kinswoman ;
And as averse to stand before your face,
Defenceless, and condemn'd in your disgrace,
Till the good king be here to clear it all—
Will you vouchsafe to hear me ?

Est. As you will.

Ast. You know that, when about to leave this
world,
Our royal grandsire, King Alfonso, left
Three children ; one a son, Basilio,
Who wears—long may he wear !—the crown of
Poland ;
And daughters twain : of whom the elder was
Your mother, Clorileña, now some while
Exalted to a more than mortal throne ;
And Recisunda, mine, the younger sister,
Who, married to the Prince of Muscovy,
Gave me the light which may she live to see
Herself for many, many years to come.

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Meanwhile, good King Basilio, as you know,
 Deep in abstruser studies than this world,
 And busier with the stars than lady's eyes,
 Has never by a second marriage yet
 Replaced, as Poland ask'd of him, the heir
 An early marriage brought and took away ;
 His young queen dying with the son she bore him :
 And in such alienation grown so old
 As leaves no other hope of heir to Poland
 Than his two sisters' children ; you, fair cousin,
 And me ; for whom the Commons of the realm
 Divide themselves into two several factions ;
 Whether for you, the elder sister's child ;
 Or me, born of the younger, but, they say,
 My natural prerogative of man
 Outweighing your priority of birth.
 Which discord growing loud and dangerous,
 Our uncle, King Basilio, doubly sage
 In prophesying and providing for
 The future, as to deal with it when come,
 Bids us here meet to-day in solemn council
 Our several pretensions to compose.
 And, but the martial out-burst that proclaims
 His coming, makes all further parley vain,
 Unless my bosom, by which only wise
 I prophesy, now wrongly prophesies,
 By such a happy compact as I dare
 But glance at till the Royal Sage declare.

(*Trumpets, &c. Enter KING BASILIO with
 his Council.*)

All. The King ! God save the King !

Estrella. } Oh, Royal Sir !—

Astolfo. } (*Kneeling*) God save your Majesty !—

King. Rise, both of you,

Rise to my arms, Astolfo and Estrella ;
 As my two sisters' children always mine,
 Now more than ever, since myself and Poland
 Solely to you for our succession look'd.
 And now give ear, you and your several factions,
 And you, the Peers and Princes of this realm,
 While I reveal the purport of this meeting
 In words whose necessary length I trust
 No unsuccessful issue shall excuse.
 You and the world who have surnamed me
 'Sage'

Know that I owe that title, if my due,
 To my long meditation on the book
 Which ever lying open overhead—
 The book of heav'n, I mean—so few have read ;
 Whose golden letters on whose sapphire leaf,
 Distinguishing the page of day and night,
 And all the revolution of the year ;
 So with the turning volume where they lie
 Still changing their prophetic syllables,
 They register the destinies of men :
 Until with eyes that, dim with years indeed,
 Are quicker to pursue the stars that rule them,
 I get the start of Time, and from his hand
 The wand of tardy revelation draw.
 Oh, had the self-same heav'n upon his page
 Inscribed my death ere I should read my life

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

And, by fore-casting of my own mischance,
Play not the victim but the suicide
In my own tragedy !—But you shall hear.
You know how once, as kings must for their
people,

And only once, as wise men for themselves,
I woo'd and wedded : know too that my Queen
In childing died ; but not, as you believe,
With her, the son she died in giving life to.
For, as the hour of birth was on the stroke,
Her brain conceiving with her womb, she
dream'd

A serpent tore her entrail. And, too surely
(For evil omen seldom speaks in vain)
The man-child breaking from that living tomb
That makes our birth the antitype of death,
Man-grateful, for the life she gave him paid
By killing her : and with such circumstance
As suited such unnatural tragedy ;
He coming into light, if light it were
That darken'd at his very horoscope,
When heaven's two champions—sun and moon I
mean—

Suffused in blood upon each other fell
In such a raging duel of eclipse
As hath not terrified the universe
Since that which wept in blood the death of
Christ :

When the dead walk'd, the waters turn'd to
blood,

Earth and her cities totter'd, and the world

Seem'd shaken to its last paralysis.
In such a paroxysm of dissolution
That son of mine was born ; by that first act
Heading the monstrous catalogue of crime,
I found fore-written in his horoscope ;
As great a monster in man's history
As was in nature his nativity ;
So savage, bloody, terrible, and impious,
Who, should he live, would tear his country's
entrails,
As by his birth his mother's ; with which crime
Beginning, he should clench the dreadful tale
By trampling on his father's silver head.
All which fore-reading, and his act of birth
Fate's warrant that I read his life aright ;
To save his country from his mother's fate,
I gave abroad that he had died with her
His being slew ; with midnight secrecy
I had him carried to a lonely tower
Hewn from the mountain-barriers of the realm,
And under strict anathema of death
Guarded from men's inquisitive approach,
Save from the trusty few one needs must trust ;
Who while his fasten'd body they provide
With salutary garb and nourishment,
Instruct his soul in what no soul may miss
Of holy faith, and in such other lore
As may solace his life-imprisonment,
And tame perhaps the Savage prophesied
Toward such a trial as I aim at now,
And now demand your special hearing to.

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

What in this fearful business I have done,
 Judge whether lightly or maliciously,—
 I, with my own and only flesh and blood,
 And proper lineal inheritor !
 I swear, had his foretold atrocities
 Touch'd me alone, I had not saved myself
 At such a cost to him ; but as a king,—
 A Christian king,—I say, advisedly,
 Who would devote his people to a tyrant
 Worse than Caligula fore-chronicled ?
 But even this not without grave mis-giving,
 Lest by some chance mis-reading of the stars,
 Or mis-direction of what rightly read,
 I wrong my son of his prerogative,
 And Poland of her rightful sovereign.
 For, sure and certain prophets as the stars,
 Although they err not, he who reads them may ;
 Or rightly reading—seeing there is One
 Who governs them, as, under Him, they us,
 We are not sure if the rough diagram
 They draw in heav'n and we interpret here,
 Be sure of operation, if the Will
 Supreme, that sometimes for some special end
 The course of providential nature breaks
 By miracle, may not of these same stars
 Cancel his own first draft, or overrule
 What else fore-written all else overrules.
 As, for example, should the Will Almighty
 Permit the Free-will of particular man
 To break the meshes of else strangling fate—
 Which Free-will, fearful of foretold abuse,

I have myself from my own son for-closed
From ever possible self-extrication ;
A terrible responsibility,
Not to the conscience to be reconciled
Unless opposing almost certain evil
Against so slight contingency of good.
Well—thus perplex'd, I have resolved at last
To bring the thing to trial : whereunto
Here have I summon'd you, my Peers, and you
Whom I more dearly look to, failing him,
As witnesses to that which I propose ;
And thus propose the doing it. Clotaldo,
Who guards my son with old fidelity,
Shall bring him hither from his tower by night,
Lockt in a sleep so fast as by my art
I rivet to within a link of death,
But yet from death so far, that next day's dawn
Shall wake him up upon the royal bed,
Complete in consciousness and faculty,
When with all princely pomp and retinue
My loyal Peers with due obeisance
Shall hail him Segismund, the Prince of Poland.
Then if with any show of human kindness
He fling discredit, not upon the stars,
But upon me, their misinterpreter ;
With all apology mistaken age
Can make to youth it never meant to harm,
To my son's forehead will I shift the crown
I long have wish'd upon a younger brow ;
And in religious humiliation,
For what of worn-out age remains to me,

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Entreat my pardon both of Heav'n and him
For tempting destinies beyond my reach.
But if, as I misdoubt, at his first step
The hoof of the predicted savage shows ;
Before predicted mischief can be done,
The self-same sleep that loosed him from the
 chain

Shall re-consign him, not to loose again.
Then shall I, having lost that heir direct,
Look solely to my sisters' children twain
Each of a claim so equal as divides
The voice of Poland to their several sides,
But, as I trust, to be entwined ere long
Into one single wreath so fair and strong
As shall at once all difference atone,
And cease the realm's division with their own.
Cousins and Princes, Peers and Councillors,
Such is the purport of this invitation,
And such is my design. Whose furtherance
If not as Sovereign, if not as Seer,
Yet one whom these white locks, if nothing else,
To patient acquiescence consecrate,
I now demand and even supplicate.

Ast. Such news, and from such lips, may well
 suspend

The tongue to loyal answer most attuned ;
But if to me as spokesman of my faction
Your Highness looks for answer ; I reply
For one and all—Let Segismund, whom now
We first hear tell of as your living heir,
Appear, and but in your sufficient eye

Approve himself worthy to be your son,
Then we will hail him Poland's rightful heir.
What says my cousin?

Est. Ay, with all my heart.

But if my youth and sex upbraid me not
That I should dare ask of so wise a king—

King. Ask, ask, fair cousin! Nothing, I am
sure,

Not well consider'd; nay, if 'twere, yet nothing
But pardonable from such lips as those.

Est. Then, with your pardon, Sir—if Segis-
mund,

My cousin, whom I shall rejoice to hail
As Prince of Poland too, as you propose,
Be to a trial coming upon which
More, as I think, than life itself depends,
Why, Sir, with sleep-disorder'd senses brought
To this uncertain contest with his stars?

King. Well ask'd indeed! As wisely be it
answer'd!—

Because it is uncertain, see you not?
For as I think I can discern between
The sudden flaws of a sleep-startled man,
And of the savage thing we have to dread;
If but bewilder'd, dazzled, and uncouth,
As might the sanest and the civilest
In circumstance so strange—nay, more than that,
If moved to any out-break short of blood,
All shall be well with him; and how much more,
If 'mid the magic turmoil of the change,
He shall so calm a resolution show

As scarce to reel beneath so great a blow !
But if with savage passion uncontroll'd
He lay about him like the brute foretold,
And must as suddenly be caged again ;
Then what redoubled anguish and despair,
From that brief flash of blissful liberty
Remitted—and for ever—to his chain !
Which so much less, if on the stage of glory
Enter'd and exited through such a door
Of sleep as makes a dream of all between.

*Est.*¹ Oh kindly answer, Sir, to question that
To charitable courtesy less wise
Might call for pardon rather ! I shall now
Gladly, what, uninstructed, loyally
I should have waited.

Ast. Your Highness doubts not me,
Nor how my heart follows my cousin's lips,
Whatever way the doubtful balance fall,
Still loyal to your bidding.

Omnes. So say all.

King. I hoped, and did expect, of all no less—
And sure no sovereign ever needed more
From all who owe him love or loyalty.
For what a strait of time I stand upon,
When to this issue not alone I bring
My son your Prince, but ev'n myself your King :
And, whichsoever way for him it turn,
Of less than little honour to myself.
For if this coming trial justify
My thus withholding from my son his right,
Is not the judge himself justified in

The father's shame? And if the judge proved
wrong,
My son withholding from his right thus long,
Shame and remorse to judge and father both :
Unless remorse and shame together drown'd
In having what I flung for worthless found.
But come—already weary with your travel,
And ill refresh'd by this strange history,
Until the hours that draw the sun from heav'n
Unite us at the customary board,
Each to his several chamber : you to rest ;
I to contrive with old Clotaldo best
The method of a stranger thing than old
Time has as yet among his records told.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Throne-room in the Palace.*
Music within.

Enter KING and CLOTALDO, meeting
a Lord in waiting.

King. You, for a moment beckon'd from your
office,
Tell me thus far how goes it. In due time
The potion left him ?

Lord. At the very hour
To which your Highness temper'd it. Yet not

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

So wholly but some lingering mist still hung
About his dawning senses—which to clear,
We fill'd and handed him a morning drink
With sleep's specific antidote suffused ;
And while with princely raiment we invested
What nature surely modell'd for a Prince—
All but the sword—as you directed—

King. Ay—

Lord. If not too loudly, yet emphatically
Still with the title of a Prince address'd him.

King. How bore he that ?

Lord. With all the rest, my liege,
I will not say so like one in a dream
As one himself misdoubting that he dream'd.

King. So far so well, Clotaldo, either way,
And best of all if tow'rd the worse I dread.
But yet no violence ?—

Lord. At most, impatience ;
Wearied perhaps with importunities
We yet were bound to offer.

King. Oh, Clotaldo !
Though thus far well, yet would myself had
drunk

The potion he revives from ! such suspense
Crowds all the pulses of life's residue
Into the present moment ; and, I think,
Whichever way the trembling scale may turn,
Will leave the crown of Poland for some one
To wait no longer than the setting sun !

Clo. Courage, my liege ! The curtain is un-
drawn,

And each must play his part out manfully,
Leaving the rest to heav'n.

King. Whose written words
If I should misinterpret or transgress !
But as you say—

(To the Lord, who exit). You, back to him at
once ;

Clotaldo, you, when he is somewhat used
To the new world of which they call him
Prince,

Where place and face, and all, is strange to him,
With your known features and familiar garb
Shall then, as chorus to the scene, accost him,
And by such earnest of that old and too
Familiar world, assure him of the new.
Last in the strange procession, I myself
Will by one full and last development
Complete the plot for that catastrophe
That he must put to all ; God grant it be
The crown of Poland on his brows !—Hark !
hark !—

Was that his voice within ?—Now louder—Oh,
Clotaldo, what ! so soon begun to roar !—
Again ! above the music— But betide
What may, until the moment, we must hide.

[Exeunt KING and CLOTALDO.]

Segismund (within). Forbear ! I stifle with
your perfume ! cease

Your crazy salutations ! peace, I say—

Begone, or let me go, ere I go mad

With all this babble, mummary, and glare,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

For I am growing dangerous—Air! room!
air!—

[He rushes in. Music ceases.]

Oh but to save the reeling brain from wreck
With its bewilder'd senses!—

[He covers his eyes for awhile.]

What! Ev'n now

That Babel left behind me, but my eyes
Pursued by the same glamour, that—unless
Alike bewitch'd too—the confederate sense
Vouches for palpable: bright-shining floors
That ring hard answer back to the stamp'd heel,
And shoot up airy columns marble-cold,
That, as they climb, break into golden leaf
And capital, till they embrace aloft
In clustering flower and fruitage over walls
Hung with such purple curtain as the West
Fringes with such a gold; or over-laid
With sanguine-glowing semblances of men,
Each in his all but living action busied,
Or from the wall they look from, with fix'd eyes
Pursuing me; and one most strange of all
That, as I pass'd the crystal on the wall,
Look'd from it—left it—and as I return,
Returns, and looks me face to face again—
Unless some false reflection of my brain,
The outward semblance of myself—Myself?
How know that tawdry shadow for myself,
But that it moves as I move; lifts his hand
With mine; each motion echoing so close
The immediate suggestion of the will

In which myself I recognize—Myself!—
What, this fantastic Segismund the same
Who last night, as for all his nights before,
Lay down to sleep in wolf-skin on the ground
In a black turret which the wolf howl'd round,
And woke again upon a golden bed,
Round which as clouds about a rising sun,
In scarce less glittering caparison,
Gather'd gay shapes that, underneath a breeze
Of music, handed him upon their knees
The wine of heaven in a cup of gold,
And still in soft melodious under-song
Hailing me Prince of Poland!—'Segismund,'
They said, 'Our Prince! The Prince of Poland!'
and

Again, 'Oh, welcome, welcome, to his own,
'Our own Prince Segismund—'

Oh, but a blast—

One blast of the rough mountain air! one look
At the grim features—(*He goes to the window*)
What they disvizard also! shatter'd chaos
Cast into stately shape and masonry,
Between whose channel'd and perspective sides
Compact with rooted towers, and flourishing
To heav'n with gilded pinnacle and spire,
Flows the live current ever to and fro
With open aspect and free step!—Clotaldo!
Clotaldo!—calling as one scarce dares call
For him who suddenly might break the spell
One fears to walk without him—Why, that I,
With unencumber'd step as any there,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Go stumbling through my glory—feeling for
That iron leading-string—ay, for myself—
For that fast-anchor'd self of yesterday,
Of yesterday, and all my life before,
Ere drifted clean from self-identity
Upon the fluctuation of to-day's
Mad whirling circumstance !—And, fool, why
not ?

If reason, sense, and self-identity
Obliterated from a worn-out brain,
Art thou not maddest striving to be sane,
And catching at that Self of yesterday
That, like a leper's rags, best flung away !
Or if not mad, then dreaming—dreaming?—
well—

Dreaming then—Or, if self to self be true,
Not mock'd by that, but as poor souls have been
By those who wrong'd them, to give wrong new
relish ?

Or have those stars indeed they told me of
As masters of my wretched life of old,
Into some happier constellation roll'd,
And brought my better fortune out on earth
Clear as themselves in heav'n !—Prince Segismund
They call'd me—and at will I shook them off—
Will they return again at my command
Again to call me so ?—Within there ! You !
Segismund calls—Prince Segismund—

(He has seated himself on the throne.

Enter CHAMBERLAIN, with lords in waiting.)

Chamb. I rejoice
That unadvised of any but the voice
Of royal instinct in the blood, your Highness
Has ta'en the chair that you were born to fill.

Seg. The chair ?

Chamb. The royal throne of Poland, Sir,
Which may your Royal Highness keep as long
As he that now rules from it shall have ruled
When heav'n has call'd him to itself.

Seg. When he ?—

Chamb. Your royal father, King Basilio, Sir.

Seg. My royal father—King Basilio.
You see I answer but as Echo does,
Not knowing what she listens or repeats.
This is my throne—this is my palace—Oh,
But this out of the window ?—

Chamb. Warsaw, Sir,
Your capital—

Seg. And all the moving people ?

Chamb. Your subjects and your vassals like
ourselves.

Seg. Ay, ay—my subjects—in my capital—
Warsaw—and I am Prince of it—You see
It needs much iteration to strike sense
Into the human echo.

Chamb. Left awhile
In the quick brain, the word will quickly to
Full meaning blow.

Seg. You think so ?

Chamb. And meanwhile
Lest our obsequiousness, which means no worse

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Than customary honour to the Prince
We most rejoice to welcome, trouble you,
Should we retire again ? or stand apart ?
Or would your Highness have the music play
Again, which meditation, as they say,
So often loves to float upon ?

Seg. The music ?

No—yes—perhaps the trumpet—(*Aside*) Yet if
that

Brought back the troop !

A Lord. The trumpet! There again
How trumpet-like spoke out the blood of Poland!

Chamb. Before the morning is far up, your
Highness

Will have the trumpet marshalling your soldiers
Under the Palace windows.

Seg. Ah, my soldiers—

My soldiers—not black-vizor'd?—

Chamb. Sir ?

Seg. No matter.

But—one thing—for a moment—in your ear—
Do you know one Clotaldo?

Chamb. Oh, my Lord,

He and myself together, I may say,
Although in different vocations,
Have silver'd in your royal father's service ;
And, as I trust, with both of us a few
White hairs to fall in yours.

Seg. Well said, well said !

Basilio, my father—well—Clotaldo—
Is he my kinsman too?

Chamb. Oh, my good Lord,
A General simply in your Highness' service,
Than whom your Highness has no trustier.

Seg. Ay, so you said before, I think. And you
With that white wand of yours—
Why, now I think on't, I have read of such
A silver-hair'd magician with a wand,
Who in a moment, with a wave of it,
Turn'd rags to jewels, clowns to emperors,
By some benigner magic than the stars
Spirited poor good people out of hand
From all their woes ; in some enchanted sleep
Carried them off on cloud or dragon-back
Over the mountains, over the wide Deep,
And set them down to wake in Fairyland.

Chamb. Oh, my good Lord, you laugh at me
—and I
Right glad to make you laugh at such a price :
You know me no enchanter : if I were,
I and my wand as much as your Highness',
As now your chamberlain—

Seg. My chamberlain ?—
And these that follow you ?—

Chamb. On you, my Lord ;
Your Highness' lords in waiting.

Seg. Lords in waiting.
Well, I have now learn'd to repeat, I think,
If only but by rote—This is my palace,
And this my throne—which unadvised—And that
Out of the window there my Capital ;
And all the people moving up and down

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

My subjects and my vassals like yourselves,
My chamberlain—and lords in waiting—and
Clotaldo—and Clotaldo?—

You are an aged, and seem a reverend man—
You do not—though his fellow-officer—
You do not mean to mock me?

Chamb.

Oh, my Lord!

Seg. Well then—If no magician, as you say,
Yet setting me a riddle, that my brain,
With all its senses whirling, cannot solve,
Yourself or one of these with you must answer—
How I—that only last night fell asleep
Not knowing that the very soil of earth
I lay down—chain'd—to sleep upon was Poland—
Awake to find myself the Lord of it,
With Lords, and Generals, and Chamberlains,
And ev'n my very Gaoler, for my vassals!

Enter suddenly CLOTALDO.

Clotaldo. Stand all aside
That I may put into his hand the clue
To lead him out of this amazement. Sir,
Vouchsafe your Highness from my bended knee
Receive my homage first.

Seg.

Clotaldo! What,

At last—his old self—undisguised where all
Is masquerade—to end it!—You kneeling too!
What! have the stars you told me long ago
Laid that old work upon you, added this,
That, having chain'd your prisoner so long,

You loose his body now to slay his wits,
Dragging him—how I know not—whither scarce
I understand—dressing him up in all
This frippery, with your dumb familiars
Disvizer'd, and their lips unlock'd to lie,
Calling him Prince and King, and, madman-like,
Setting a crown of straw upon his head ?

Glo. Would but your Highness, as indeed I
now

Must call you—and upon his bended knee
Never bent Subject more devotedly—
However all about you, and perhaps
You to yourself incomprehensiblest,
But rest in the assurance of your own
Sane waking senses, by these witnesses
Attested, till the story of it all,
Of which I bring a chapter, be reveal'd,
Assured of all you see and hear as neither
Madness nor mockery—

Seg.

What then ?

Glo.

All it seems :

This palace with its royal garniture ;
This capital of which it is the eye,
With all its temples, marts, and arsenals ;
This realm of which this city is the head,
With all its cities, villages, and tilth,
Its armies, fleets, and commerce ; all your own ;
And all the living souls that make them up,
From those who now, and those who shall, salute
you,
Down to the poorest peasant of the realm,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Your subjects—Who, though now their mighty
voice

Sleeps in the general body unapprized,
Wait but a word from those about you now
To hail you Prince of Poland, Segismund.

Seg. All this is so?

Clô. As sure as anything

Is, or can be.

Seg. You swear it on the faith

You taught me—elsewhere?—

Glo. (kissing the hilt of his sword)—Swear it upon this

Symbol, and champion of the holy faith
I wear it to defend.

Seg. (to himself). My eyes have not deceived
me, nor my ears,

With this transfiguration, nor the strain
Of royal welcome that arose and blew,
Breathed from no lying lips, along with it.
For here Clotaldo comes, his own old self,
Who, if not Lie and phantom with the rest—
(*Aloud*) Well then, all this is thus.

For have not these fine people told me so,
And you, Clotaldo, sworn it? And the Why
And Wherefore are to follow by and bye!
And yet—and yet—why wait for that which you
Who take your oath on it can answer—and
Indeed it presses hard upon my brain—
What I was asking of these gentlemen
When you came in upon us; how it is
That I—the Segismund you know so long—

No longer than the sun that rose to-day
Rose—and from what you know—
Rose to be Prince of Poland?

Clo. So to be
Acknowledged and entreated, sir.

Seg. So be
Acknowledged and entreated—
Well—But if now by all, by some at least
So known—if not entreated—heretofore—
Though not by you—For, now I think again,
Of what should be your attestation worth,
You that of all my questionable subjects
Who knowing what, yet left me where, I was,
You least of all, Clotaldo, till the dawn
Of this first day that told it to myself?

Clo. Oh, let your Highness draw the line
across
Fore-written sorrow, and in this new dawn
Bury that long sad night.

Seg. Not ev'n the Dead,
Call'd to the resurrection of the blest,
Shall so directly drop all memory
Of woes and wrongs foregone!

Clo. But not resent—
Purged by the trial of that sorrow past
For full fruition of their present bliss.

Seg. But leaving with the Judge what, till
this earth
Be cancell'd in the burning heav'ns, He leaves
His earthly delegates to execute,
Of retribution in reward to them

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

And woe to those who wrong'd them—Not as
 you,
Not you, Clotaldo, knowing not—And yet
Ev'n to the guiltiest wretch in all the realm,
Of any treason guilty short of that,
Stern usage—but assuredly not knowing,
Not knowing 'twas your sovereign lord, Clotaldo,
You used so sternly.

Clo. Ay, sir ; with the same
Devotion and fidelity that now
Does homage to him for my sovereign.

Seg. Fidelity that held his Prince in chains !

Clo. Fidelity more fast than had it loosed
 him—

Seg. Ev'n from the very dawn of consciousness
Down at the bottom of the barren rocks,
Where scarce a ray of sunshine found him out,
In which the poorest beggar of my realm
At least to human-full proportion grows—
Me ! Me—whose station was the kingdom's
 top

To flourish in, reaching my head to heav'n,
And with my branches overshadowing
The meaner growth below !

Clo. Still with the same
Fidelity—

Seg. To me !—

Clo. Ay, sir, to you,
Through that divine allegiance upon which
All Order and Authority is based ;
Which to revolt against—

Seg. Were to revolt
Against the stars, belike !

Clo. And him who reads them ;
And by that right, and by the sovereignty
He wears as you shall wear it after him ;
Ay, one to whom yourself—
Yourself, ev'n more than any subject here,
Are bound by yet another and more strong
Allegiance—King Basilio—your Father—

Seg. Basilio—King—my father !—

Clo. Oh, my Lord,
Let me beseech you on my bended knee,
For your own sake—for Poland's—and for his,
Who, looking up for counsel to the skies,
Did what he did under authority
To which the kings of earth themselves are
subject,
And whose behest not only he that suffers,
But he that executes, not comprehends,
But only He that orders it—

Seg. The King—
My father !—Either I am mad already,
Or that way driving fast—or I should know
That fathers do not use their children so,
Or men were loosed from all allegiance
To fathers, kings, and heav'n that order'd all.
But, mad or not, my hour is come, and I
Will have my reckoning—Either you lie,
Under the skirt of sinless majesty
Shrouding your treason ; or if *that* indeed,
Guilty itself, take refuge in the stars

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

That cannot hear the charge, or disavow—
You, whether doer or deviser, who
Come first to hand, shall pay the penalty
By the same hand you owe it to—

(Seizing CLOTALDO's sword and about to strike him.)

Enter ROSAURA suddenly.

Rosaura. Fie, my lord—forbear,
What ! a young hand raised against silver hair !—
(She retreats through the crowd.)

Seg. Stay ! stay ! What come and vanish'd as
before—

I scarce remember how—but—

Voices within. Room for Astolfo, Duke of
Muscovy !

Enter ASTOLFO.

Astolfo. Welcome, thrice welcome, the au-
spicious day,
When from the mountain where he darkling lay,
The Polish sun into the firmament
Sprung all the brighter for his late ascent,
And in meridian glory—

Seg. Where is he ?

Why must I ask this twice ?—

A Lord. The Page, my Lord ?

I wonder at his boldness—

Seg. But I tell you

He came with Angel written in his face

As now it is, when all was black as hell
About, and none of you who now—he came,
And Angel-like flung me a shining sword
To cut my way through darkness ; and again
Angel-like wrests it from me in behalf
Of one—whom I will spare for sparing him :
But he must come and plead with that same
voice

That pray'd for me—in vain.

Chamb. He is gone for,
And shall attend your pleasure, sir. Meanwhile,
Will not your Highness, as in courtesy,
Return your royal cousin's greeting ?

Seg. Whose ?

Chamb. Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy, my Lord,
Saluted, and with gallant compliment
Welcomed you to your royal title.

Seg. (to Astolfo). Oh—
You knew of this then ?

Ast. Knew of what, my Lord ?

Seg. That I was Prince of Poland all the while,
And you my subject ?

Ast. Pardon me, my Lord ;
But some few hours ago myself I learn'd
Your dignity ; but, knowing it, no more
Than when I knew it not, your subject.

Seg. What then ?

Ast. Your Highness' chamberlain ev'n now
has told you ;
Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy,
Your father's sister's son ; your cousin, sir :

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

And who as such, and in his own right Prince,
Expects from you the courtesy he shows.

Chamb. His Highness is as yet unused to
Court,

And to the ceremonious interchange
Of compliment, especially to those
Who draw their blood from the same royal
fountain.

Seg. Where is the lad ? I weary of all this—
Prince, cousins, chamberlains, and compliments—
Where are my soldiers ? Blow the trumpet, and
With one sharp blast scatter these butterflies,
And bring the men of iron to my side,
With whom a king feels like a king indeed !

Voices within. Within there ! room for the
Princess Estrella !

Enter ESTRELLA with Ladies.

Estrella. Welcome, my Lord, right welcome
to the throne

That much too long has waited for your coming :
And, in the general voice of Poland, hear
A kinswoman and cousin's no less sincere.

Seg. Ay, this is welcome welcome-worth
indeed,

And cousin cousin-worth ! Oh, I have thus
Over the threshold of the mountain seen,
Leading a bevy of fair stars, the moon
Enter the court of heav'n—My kinswoman !
My cousin ! But my subject ?—

Est. If you please
To count your cousin for your subject, sir,
You shall not find her a disloyal.

Seg. Oh,
But there are twin stars in that heav'nly face,
That now I know for having over-ruled
Those evil ones that darken'd all my past,
And brought me forth from that captivity
To be the slave of her who set me free.

Est. Indeed, my Lord, these eyes have no
such power
Over the past or present : but perhaps
They brighten at your welcome to supply
The little that a lady's speech commends ;
And in the hope that, let whichever be
The other's subject, we may both be friends.

Seg. Your hand to that—But why does this
warm hand
Shoot a cold shudder through me ?

Est. In revenge
For likening me to that cold moon, perhaps.

Seg. Oh, but the lip whose music tells me so
Breathes of a warmer planet, and that lip
Shall remedy the treason of the hand !

(He catches to embrace her.)

Est. Release me, sir !

Chamb. And pardon me, my Lord,
This lady is a Princess absolute,
As Prince he is who just saluted you,
And claims her by affiance.

Seg. Hence, old fool,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

For ever thrusting that white stick of yours
Between me and my pleasure !

Ast. This cause is mine.

Forbear, sir—

Seg. What, sir mouth-piece, you again ?

Ast. My Lord, I waive your insult to myself
In recognition of the dignity
You yet are new to, and that greater still
You look in time to wear. But for this lady—
Whom, if my cousin now, I hope to claim
Henceforth by yet a nearer, dearer name—

Seg. And what care I ? She is my cousin too :
And if you be a Prince—well, am not I ?
Lord of the very soil you stand upon ?
By that, and by that right beside of blood
That like a fiery fountain hitherto
Pent in the rock leaps toward her at her touch,
Mine, before all the cousins in Muscovy !
You call me Prince of Poland, and yourselves
My subjects—traitors therefore to this hour,
Who let me perish all my youth away
Chain'd there among the mountains ; till, forsooth,
Terrified at your treachery foregone,
You spirit me up here, I know not how,
Popinjay-like invest me like yourselves,
Choke me with scent and music that I loathe,
And, worse than all the music and the scent,
With false, long-winded, fulsome compliment,
That ' Oh, you are my subjects ! ' and in word
Reiterating still obedience,
Thwart me in deed at every step I take :

When just about to wreak a just revenge
Upon that old arch-traitor of you all,
Filch from my vengeance him I hate ; and him
I loved—the first and only face—till this—
I cared to look on in your ugly court—
And now when palpably I grasp at last
What hitherto but shadow'd in my dreams—
Affiances and interferences,
The first who dares to meddle with me more—
Princes and chamberlains and counsellors,
Touch her who dares !—

Ast. That dare I—

Seg. (*seizing him by the throat*). You dare !

Chamb. My Lord !—

A Lord. His strength 's a lion's—

Voices within. The King ! The King !—

Enter KING.

A Lord. And on a sudden how he stands at
gaze,

As might a wolf just fasten'd on his prey,
Glaring at a suddenly encounter'd lion.

King. And I that hither flew with open arms
To fold them round my son, must now return
To press them to an empty heart again !

(*He sits on the throne.*)

Seg. That is the King ?—My father ?—

(*After a long pause*).

I have heard
That sometimes some blind instinct has been
known

To draw to mutual recognition those
Of the same blood, beyond all memory
Divided, or ev'n never met before.
I know not how this is—perhaps in brutes
That live by kindlier instincts—but I know
That looking now upon that head whose crown
Pronounces him a sovereign king, I feel
No setting of the current in my blood
Tow'rd him as sire. How is't with you, old man,
Tow'rd him they call your son?—

Seg. Your sorrow, then?

Seg. Ay, but how know this sorrow, that has
grown

And moulded to this present shape of man,
As of your own creation ?

Seg. But from that hour to this, near, as I think,

Some twenty such renewals of the year
As trace themselves upon the barren rocks,
I never saw you, nor you me—unless,
Unless, indeed, through one of those dark masks
Through which a son might fail to recognize
The best of fathers?

King. Be that as you will :
But, now we see each other face to face,
Know me as you I know ; which did I not,
By whatsoever signs, assuredly
You were not here to prove it at my risk.

Seg. You are my father.
And is it true then, as Clotaldo swears,
'Twas you that from the dawning birth of one
Yourself brought into being,—you, I say,
Who stole his very birthright; not alone
That secondary and peculiar right
Of sovereignty, but even that prime
Inheritance that all men share alike,
And chain'd him—chain'd him!—like a wild
 beast's whelp,
Among as savage mountains, to this hour?
Answer if this be thus.

King. Oh, Segismund,
In all that I have done that seems to you,
And, without further hearing, fairly seems,
Unnatural and cruel—'twas not I,
But one who writes His order in the sky
I dared not misinterpret nor neglect,
Who knows with what reluctance—

Seg. Oh, those stars,
Those stars, that too far up from human blame
To clear themselves, or careless of the charge,
Still bear upon their shining shoulders all
The guilt men shift upon them!

King. Nay, but think :
Not only on the common score of kind,
But that peculiar count of sovereignty—
If not behind the beast in brain as heart,
How should I thus deal with my innocent child,
Doubly desired, and doubly dear when come,
As that sweet second-self that all desire,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

And princes more than all, to root themselves
By that succession in their people's hearts ?
Unless at that superior Will, to which
Not kings alone, but sovereign nature bows.

Seg. And what had those same stars to tell
of me

That should compel a father and a king
So much against that double instinct ?

King. That,
Which I have brought you hither, at my peril,
Against their written warning, to disprove,
By justice, mercy, human kindliness.

Seg. And therefore made yourself their instru-
ment

To make your son the savage and the brute
They only prophesied ?—Are you not afraid,
Lest, irrespective as such creatures are
Of such relationship, the brute you made
Revenge the man you marr'd—like sire, like
son.

To do by you as you by me have done ?

King. You never had a savage heart from me ;
I may appeal to Poland.

Seg. Then from whom ?
If pure in fountain, poison'd by yourself
When scarce begun to flow.—To make a man
Not, as I see, degraded from the mould
I came from, nor compared to those about,
And then to throw your own flesh to the dogs !—
Why not at once, I say, if terrified
At the prophetic omens of my birth,

Have drown'd or stifled me, as they do whelps
Too costly or too dangerous to keep ?

King. That, living, you might learn to live,
and rule
Yourself and Poland.

Seg. By the means you took
To spoil for either ?

King. Nay, but, Segismund !
You know not—cannot know—happily want-
ing

The sad experience on which knowledge grows,
How the too early consciousness of power
Spoils the best blood ; nor whether for your
long-

Constrain'd disheritance (which, but for me,
Remember, and for my relenting love
Bursting the bond of fate, had been eternal)
You have not now a full indemnity ;
Wearing the blossom of your youth unspent
In the voluptuous sunshine of a court,
That often, by too early blossoming,
Too soon deflowers the rose of royalty.

Seg. Ay, but what some precocious warmth
may spill,
May not an early frost as surely kill ?

King. But, Segismund, my son, whose quick
discourse

Proves I have not extinguish'd and destroy'd
The Man you charge me with extinguishing,
However it condemn me for the fault
Of keeping a good light so long eclipsed,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Reflect ! This is the moment upon which
Those stars, whose eyes, although we see them
not,

By day as well as night are on us still,
Hang watching up in the meridian heaven
Which way the balance turns ; and if to you—
As by your dealing God decide it may,
To my confusion !—let me answer it
Unto yourself alone, who shall at once
Approve yourself to be your father's judge,
And sovereign of Poland in his stead,
By justice, mercy, self-sobriety,
And all the reasonable attributes
Without which, impotent to rule himself,
Others one cannot, and one must not rule ;
But which if you but show the blossom of—
All that is past we shall but look upon
As the first out-fling of a generous nature
Rioting in first liberty ; and if
This blossom do but promise such a flower
As promises in turn its kindly fruit :
Forthwith upon your brows the royal crown,
That now weighs heavy on my aged brows,
I will devolve ; and while I pass away
Into some cloister, with my Maker there
To make my peace in penitence and prayer,
Happily settle the disorder'd realm
That now cries loudly for a lineal heir.

Seg. And so—

When the crown falters on your shaking head,
And slips the sceptre from your palsied hand,

And Poland for her rightful heir cries out ;
When not only your stol'n monopoly
Fails you of earthly power, but 'cross the grave
The judgment-trumpet of another world
Calls you to count for your abuse of this ;
Then, oh then, terrified by the double danger,
You drag me from my den—
Boast not of giving up at last the power
You can no longer hold, and never rightly
Held, but in fee for him you robb'd it from ;
And be assured your Savage, once let loose,
Will not be caged again so quickly ; not
By threat or adulation to be tamed,
Till he have had his quarrel out with those
Who made him what he is.

King. Beware ! Beware !
Subdue the kindled Tiger in your eye,
Nor dream that it was sheer necessity
Made me thus far relax the bond of fate,
And, with far more of terror than of hope
Threaten myself, my people, and the State.
Know that, if old, I yet have vigour left
To wield the sword as well as wear the crown ;
And if my more immediate issue fail,
Not wanting scions of collateral blood,
Whose wholesome growth shall more than com-
pensate
For all the loss of a distorted stem.

Seg. That will I straightway bring to trial—
Oh,
After a revelation such as this,

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

The Last Day shall have little left to show
 Of righted wrong and villany requited !
 Nay, Judgment now beginning upon earth,
 Myself, methinks, in right of all my wrongs,
 Appointed heav'n's avenging minister,
 Accuser, judge, and executioner,
 Sword in hand, cite the guilty—First, as worst,
 The usurper of his son's inheritance ;
 Him and his old accomplice, time and crime
 Inveterate, and unable to repay
 The golden years of life they stole away.
 What, does he yet maintain his state, and keep
 The throne he should be judged from ? Down
 with him,
 That I may trample on the false white head
 So long has worn my crown ! Where are my
 soldiers ?
 Of all my subjects and my vassals here
 Not one to do my bidding ? Hark ! A
 trumpet !
 The trumpet—

*(He pauses as the trumpet sounds as in ACT I.,
 and masked Soldiers gradually fill in behind
 the Throne.)*

King (rising before his throne). Ay, indeed, the
 trumpet blows

A memorable note, to summon those
 Who, if forthwith you fall not at the feet
 Of him whose head you threaten with the dust,
 Forthwith shall draw the curtain of the Past
 About you ; and this momentary gleam

Of glory that you think to hold life-fast,
So coming, so shall vanish, as a dream.

Seg. He prophesies ; the old man prophesies ;
And, at his trumpet's summons, from the tower
The leash-bound shadows loosen'd after me
My rising glory reach and over-lour—
But, reach not I my height, he shall not hold,
But with me back to his own darkness !

*(He dashes toward the throne and is enclosed
by the soldiers.)*

Traitors !

Hold off ! Unhand me !—Am not I your king ?
And you would strangle him !—
But I am breaking with an inward Fire
Shall scorch you off, and wrap me on the wings
Of conflagration from a kindled pyre
Of lying prophecies and prophet-kings
Above the extinguish'd stars — Reach me the
sword

He flung me—Fill me such a bowl of wine
As that you woke the day with—

King. And shall close,—
But of the vintage that Clotaldo knows.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Tower, &c., as in ACT I. SCENE I.*

SEGISMUND, *as at first, and* CLOTALDO.

Clotaldo. Princes and princesses, and counsellors,

Fluster'd to right and left—my life made at—
But that was nothing—

Even the white-hair'd, venerable King
Seized on—Indeed, you made wild work of it ;
And so discover'd in your outward action,
Flinging your arms about you in your sleep,
Grinding your teeth—and, as I now remember,
Woke mouthing out judgment and execution,
On those about you.

Seg. Ay, I did indeed.

Chlo. Ev'n now your eyes stare wild ; your
hair stands up—

Your pulses throb and flutter, reeling still
Under the storm of such a dream—

Seg. A dream !

That seem'd as swearable reality
As what I wake in now.

Clo. Ay—wondrous how

Imagination in a sleeping brain
Out of the uncontingent senses draws
Sensations strong as from the real touch ;
That we not only laugh aloud, and drench

With tears our pillow ; but in the agony
Of some imaginary conflict, fight
And struggle—ev'n as you did ; some, 'tis
thought,
Under the dreamt-of stroke of death have died.

Seg. And what so very strange too—In that
world

Where place as well as people all was strange,
Ev'n I almost as strange unto myself,
You only, you, Clotaldo—you, as much
And palpably yourself as now you are,
Came in this very garb you ever wore,
By such a token of the past, you said,
To assure me of that seeming present.

Clo.

Ay ?

Seg. Ay ; and even told me of the very stars
You tell me here of—how in spite of them,
I was enlarged to all that glory.

Clo.

Ay,

By the false spirits' nice contrivance thus
A little truth oft leavens all the false,
The better to delude us.

Seg.

For you know

'Tis nothing but a dream ?

Clo.

Nay, you yourself

Know best how lately you awoke from that
You know you went to sleep on ?—

Why, have you never dreamt the like before ?

Seg. Never, to such reality.

Clo.

Such dreams

Are oftentimes the sleeping exhalations

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Of that ambition that lies smouldering
Under the ashes of the lowest fortune ;
By which, when reason slumbers, or has lost
The reins of sensible comparison,
We fly at something higher than we are—
Scarce ever dive to lower—to be kings,
Or conquerors, crown'd with laurel or with gold,
Nay, mounting heav'n itself on eagle wings.
Which, by the way, now that I think of it,
May furnish us the key to this high flight—
That royal Eagle we were watching, and
Talking of as you went to sleep last night.

Seg. Last night ? Last night ?

Clo. Ay, do you not remember
Envyng his immunity of flight,
As, rising from his throne of rock, he sail'd
Above the mountains far into the West,
That burn'd about him, while with poising wings
He darkled in it as a burning brand
Is seen to smoulder in the fire it feeds ?

Seg. Last night—last night—Oh, what a day
was that

Between that last night and this sad To-day !

Clo. And yet, perhaps,
Only some few dark moments, into which
Imagination, once lit up within
And unconditional of time and space,
Can pour infinities.

Seg. And I remember
How the old man they call'd the King, who wore
The crown of gold about his silver hair,

And a mysterious girdle round his waist,
Just when my rage was roaring at his height,
And after which it all was dark again,
Bid me beware lest all should be a dream.

Clo. Ay—there another speciality of dreams,
That once the dreamer 'gins to dream he dreams,
His foot is on the very verge of waking.

Seg. Would it had been upon the verge of
death

That knows no waking—
Lifting me up to glory, to fall back,
Stunn'd, crippled—wretcheder than ev'n before.

Clo. Yet not so glorious, Segismund, if you
Your visionary honour wore so ill
As to work murder and revenge on those
Who meant you well.

Seg. Who meant me !—me ! their Prince
Chain'd like a felon—

Clo. Stay, stay—Not so fast,
You dream'd the Prince, remember.

Seg. Then in dream
Revenged it only.

Clo. True. But as they say
Dreams are rough copies of the waking soul
Yet uncorrected of the higher Will,
So that men sometimes in their dreams confess
An unsuspected, or forgotten, self ;
One must beware to check—ay, if one may,
Stifle ere born, such passion in ourselves
As makes, we see, such havoc with our sleep,
And ill reacts upon the waking day.

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

And, by the bye, for one test, Segismund,
Between such swearable realities—
Since Dreaming, Madness, Passion, are akin
In missing each that salutary rein
Of reason, and the guiding will of man :
One test, I think, of waking sanity
Shall be that conscious power of self-control,
To curb all passion, but much most of all
That evil and vindictive, that ill squares
With human, and with holy canon less,
Which bids us pardon ev'n our enemies,
And much more those who, out of no ill will,
Mistakenly have taken up the rod
Which heav'n, they think, has put into their
hands.

Seg. I think I soon shall have to try again—
Sleep has not yet done with me.

Clot. Such a sleep.
Take my advice—'tis early yet—the sun
Scarce up above the mountain ; go within,
And if the night deceived you, try anew
With morning ; morning dreams they say come
true.

Seg. Oh, rather pray for me a sleep so fast
As shall obliterate dream and waking too.

[Exit into the tower.

Clô. So sleep; sleep fast: and sleep away
those two

Night-potions, and the waking dream between
Which dream thou must believe ; and, if to see
Again, poor Segismund ! that dream must be.—

And yet, and yet, in these our ghostly lives,
Half night, half day, half sleeping, half awake,
How if our waking life, like that of sleep,
Be all a dream in that eternal life
To which we wake not till we sleep in death ?
How if, I say, the senses we now trust
For date of sensible comparison,—
Ay, ev'n the Reason's self that dates with them,
Should be in essence or intensity
Hereafter so transcended, and awoke
To a perceptive subtlety so keen
As to confess themselves befooled before,
In all that now they will avouch for most ?
One man—like this—but only so much longer
As life is longer than a summer's day,
Believed himself a king upon his throne,
And play'd at hazard with his fellows' lives,
Who cheaply dream'd away their lives to him.
The sailor dream'd of tossing on the flood :
The soldier of his laurels grown in blood :
The lover of the beauty that he knew
Must yet dissolve to dusty residue :
The merchant and the miser of his bags
Of finger'd gold ; the beggar of his rags :
And all this stage of earth on which we seem
Such busy actors, and the parts we play'd,
Substantial as the shadow of a shade,
And Dreaming but a dream within a dream !

Fife. Was it not said, sir,
By some philosopher as yet unborn,
That any chimney-sweep who for twelve hours

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Dreams himself king is happy as the king
Who dreams himself twelve hours a chimney-
sweep?

Clo. A theme indeed for wiser heads than
yours

To moralize upon—How came you here?—

Fife. Not of my own will, I assure you, sir.
No matter for myself: but I would know
About my mistress—I mean, master—

Clo. Oh,
Now I remember—Well, your master-mistress
Is well, and deftly on its errand speeds,
As you shall—if you can but hold your tongue.
Can you?

Fife. I'd rather be at home again.

Clo. Where you shall be the quicker if while
here
You can keep silence.

Fife. I may whistle, then?
Which by the virtue of my name I do,
And also as a reasonable test
Of waking sanity—

Clo. Well, whistle then;
And for another reason you forgot,
That while you whistle, you can chatter not.
Only remember—if you quit this pass—

Fife. (His rhymes are out, or he had call'd it
spot)—

Clo. A bullet brings you to.
I must forthwith to court to tell the King
The issue of this lamentable day,

That buries all his hope in night. (*To Fife*)
Farewell.

Remember.

Fife. But a moment—but a word !
When shall I see my mis—mas—

Clo. Be content :
All in good time ; and then, and not before,
Never to miss your master any more. [*Exit.*

Fife. Such talk of dreaming—dreaming—I
begin
To doubt if I be dreaming I am Fife,
Who with a lad who call'd herself a boy
Because—I doubt there's some confusion here—
He wore no petticoat, came on a time
Riding from Muscovy on half a horse,
Who must have dreamt she was a horse entire,
To cant me off upon my hinder face
Under this tower, wall-eyed and musket-tongued,
With sentinels a-pacing up and down,
Crying All's well when all is far from well,
All the day long, and all the night, until
I dream—if what is dreaming be not waking—
Of bells a-tolling and processions rolling
With candles, crosses, banners, San-benitos,
Of which I wear the flamy-finingest,
Through streets and places throng'd with fiery faces
To some back platform—
Oh, I shall take a fire into my hand
With thinking of my own dear Muscovy—
Only just over that Sierra there,
By which we tumbled headlong into—No-land.

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Now, if without a bullet after me,
I could but get a peep of my old home—
Perhaps of my own mule to take me there—
All's still—perhaps the gentlemen within
Are dreaming it is night behind their masks—
God send 'em a good nightmare !—Now then—
Hark !

Voices—and up the rocks—and armèd men
Climbing like cats—Puss in the corner then.
[*He hides.*

Enter SOLDIERS cautiously up the rocks.

Captain. This is the frontier pass, at any rate,
Where Poland ends and Muscovy begins.

Soldier. We must be close upon the tower, I
know,
That half way up the mountain lies ensconced.

Capt. How know you that ?

Sol. He told me so—the Page
Who put us on the scent.

Sol. 2. And, as I think,
Will soon be here to run it down with us.

Capt. Meantime, our horses on these ugly
rocks
Useless, and worse than useless with their clatter—
Leave them behind, with one or two in charge,
And softly, softly, softly.

Soldiers.

— There it is !
 — There what ?—
 — The tower—the fortress—
 — That the tower !—
 — That mouse-trap ! We could pitch it down
 the rocks

With our own hands.

— The rocks it hangs among
 Dwarf its proportions and conceal its strength ;
 Larger and stronger than you think.

— No matter ;
 No place for Poland's Prince to be shut up in.
 At it at once !

Capt. No—no—I tell you wait—
 Till those within give signal. For as yet
 We know not who side with us, and the fort
 Is strong in man and musket.

Sol. Shame to wait
 For odds with such a cause at stake.

Capt. Because
 Of such a cause at stake we wait for odds—
 For if not won at once, for ever lost :
 For any long resistance on their part
 Would bring Basilio's force to succour them
 Ere we had rescued him we come to rescue.
 So softly, softly, softly, still—

A Soldier (discovering Fife). Hilloa !

Soldiers.

—Hilloa ! Here's some one skulking—

— Seize and gag him !

—Stab him at once, say I : the only way
To make all sure.

— Hold, every man of you !
And down upon your knees !—Why, 'tis the
Prince !

— The Prince !—

— Oh, I should know him anywhere,
And anyhow disguised.

— But the Prince is chain'd.

— And of a loftier presence—

— 'Tis he, I tell you ;
Only bewilder'd as he was before.

God save your Royal Highness ! On our knees
Beseech you answer us !

Fife. Just as you please.

Well—'tis this country's custom, I suppose,
To take a poor man every now and then
And set him on the throne ; just for the fun
Of tumbling him again into the dirt.

And now my turn is come. 'Tis very pretty.

Sol. His wits have been distemper'd with their
drugs.

But do you ask him, Captain,

Capt. On my knees,
And in the name of all who kneel with me,
I do beseech your Highness answer to
Your royal title.

Fife. Still, just as you please.
 In my own poor opinion of myself—
 But that may all be dreaming, which it seems
 Is very much the fashion in this country—
 No Polish prince at all, but a poor lad
 From Muscovy ; where only help me back,
 I promise never to contest the crown
 Of Poland with whatever gentleman
 You fancy to set up.

Soldiers.

{	—	From Muscovy ?
	—	A spy then—
	—	Of Astolfo's—
	—	Spy ! a spy !—
	—	Hang him at once !

Fife. No, pray don't dream of that !

Sol. How dared you then set yourself up for our
 Prince Segismund ?

Fife. I set up !—I like that—
 When 'twas yourselves be-siegesmundered me.

Capt. No matter—Look !—The signal from
 the tower.

Prince Segismund !

Sol. (*from the tower*). Prince Segismund !

Capt. All's well.

Clotaldo safe secured ?—

Sol. (*from the tower*). No—by ill luck,
 Instead of coming in, as we had look'd for,
 He sprang on horse at once, and off at gallop.

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Capt. To Court, no doubt—a blunder that—

And yet

Perchance a blunder that may work as well
As better forethought. Having no suspicion
So will he carry none where his not going
Were of itself suspicious. But of those
Within, who side with us ?

Sol. Oh, one and all

To the last man, persuaded or compell'd.

Capt. Enough : whatever be to be retrieved
No moment to be lost. For though Clotaldo
Have no revolt to tell of in the tower,
The capital will soon awake to ours,
And the King's force come blazing after us.
Where is the Prince ?

Sol. Within ; so fast asleep

We woke him not ev'n striking off the chain
We had so cursedly help bind him with,
Not knowing what we did ; but too ashamed
Not to undo ourselves what we had done.

Capt. No matter, nor by whosoever hands,
Provided done. Come ; we will bring him
forth

Out of that stony darkness here abroad,
Where air and sunshine sooner shall disperse
The sleepy fume which they have drugg'd him
with.

*(They enter the tower, and thence bring out
SEGISMUND asleep on a pallet, and set him
in the middle of the stage.)*

Capt. Still, still so dead asleep, the very noise

And motion that we make in carrying him
 Stirs not a leaf in all the living tree.

Soldiers.

{ If living—But if by some inward blow
 For ever and irrevocably fell'd
 By what strikes deeper to the root than sleep?
 —He's dead ! He's dead ! They've killed
 him—
 — No—he breathes—
 And the heart beats—and now he breathes
 again
 Deeply, as one about to shake away
 The load of sleep.

Capt. Come, let us all kneel round,
 And with a blast of warlike instruments,
 And acclamation of all loyal hearts,
 Rouse and restore him to his royal right,
 From which no royal wrong shall drive him
 more.

*(They all kneel round his bed: trumpets,
 drums, &c.)*

Soldiers. { Segismund ! Segismund ! Prince
 Segismund !
 King Segismund ! Down with
 Basilio !
 Down with Astolfo ! Segismund
 our King ! &c.

Soldier 1. He stares upon us wildly. He
 cannot speak.

Soldier 2. I said so—driv'n him mad.

— 3. Speak to him, Captain.

Capt. Oh Royal Segismund, our Prince and King,

Look on us—listen to us—answer us,
Your faithful soldiery and subjects, now
About you kneeling, but on fire to rise
And cleave a passage through your enemies,
Until we seat you on your lawful throne.
For though your father, King Basilio,
Now King of Poland, jealous of the stars
That prophesy his setting with your rise,
Here holds you ignominiously eclipsed,
And would Astolfo, Duke of Muscovy,
Mount to the throne of Poland after him ;
So will not we, your loyal soldiery
And subjects ; neither those of us now first
Apprised of your existence and your right :
Nor those that hitherto deluded by
Allegiance false, their vizors now fling down,
And craving pardon on their knees with us
For that unconscious disloyalty,
Offer with us the service of their blood ;
Not only we and they ; but at our heels
The heart, if not the bulk, of Poland follows
To join their voices and their arms with ours,
In vindicating with our lives our own
Prince Segismund to Poland and her throne.

Soldiers. { Segismund, Segismund, Prince Segismund !
Our own King Segismund, &c.

(They all rise.)

Seg. Again ? So soon ?—What, not yet done with me ?

The sun is little higher up, I think,
Than when I last lay down,
To bury in the depth of your own sea
You that infest its shallows.

Capt. Sir !

Seg. And now,
Not in a palace, not in the fine clothes
We all were in ; but here, in the old place,
And in our old accoutrement—
Only your vizors off, and lips unlock'd
To mock me with that idle title—

Capt. Nay,
Indeed no idle title, but your own,
Then, now, and now for ever. For, behold,
Ev'n as I speak, the mountain passes fill
And bristle with the advancing soldiery
That glitters in your rising glory, sir ;
And, at our signal, echo to our cry,
'Segismund, King of Poland !' &c.

(*Shouts, trumpets, &c.*)

Seg. Oh, how cheap
The muster of a countless host of shadows,
As impotent to do with as to keep !
All this they said before—to softer music.

Capt. Soft music, sir, to what indeed were
shadows,
That, following the sunshine of a Court,
Shall back be brought with it—if shadows still,
Yet to substantial reckoning.

Seg.

They shall ?

The white-hair'd and white-wand'd chamberlain,
So busy with his wand too—the old King
That I was somewhat hard on—he had been
Hard upon me—and the fine feather'd Prince
Who crow'd so loud—my cousin,—and another,
Another cousin, we will not bear hard on—
And—But Clotaldo?

Capt.

Fled, my Lord, but close

Pursued ; and then—

Seg.

Then, as he fled before,

And after he had sworn it on his knees,
Came back to take me—where I am!—No
more.

No more of this ! Away with you ! Begone !
Whether but visions of ambitious night
That morning ought to scatter, or grown out
Of night's proportions you invade the day
To scare me from my little wits yet left,
Begone ! I know I must be near awake,
Knowing I dream ; or, if not at my voice,
Then vanish at the clapping of my hands,
Or take this foolish fellow for your sport :
Dressing me up in visionary glories,
Which the first air of waking consciousness
Scatters as fast as from the almander ¹—
That, waking one fine morning in full flower,
One rougher insurrection of the breeze
Of all her sudden honour disadorns

¹ Almander, or almandre, Chaucer's word for *almond-tree*, Rom. Rose, 1363.

To the last blossom, and she stands again
The winter-naked scare-crow that she was !

Capt. I know not what to do, nor what to say,
With all this dreaming ; I begin to doubt
They have driv'n him mad indeed, and he and we
Are lost together.

A Soldier (to Captain). Stay, stay ; I remember—
Hark in your ear a moment. (*Whispers.*)

Capt. So—so—so ?—
Oh, now indeed I do not wonder, sir,
Your senses dazzle under practices
Which treason, shrinking from its own device,
Would now persuade you only was a dream ;
But waking was as absolute as this
You wake in now, as some who saw you then,
Prince as you were and are, can testify :
Not only saw, but under false allegiance
Laid hands upon—

Soldier 1. I, to my shame !

Soldier 2. And I !

Capt. Who, to wipe out that shame, have
been the first

To stir and lead us—Hark ! (*Shouts, trumpets, &c.*)

A Soldier. Our forces, sir,
Challenging King Basilio's, now in sight,
And bearing down upon us.

Capt. Sir, you hear ;
A little hesitation and delay,
And all is lost—your own right, and the lives
Of those who now maintain it at that cost ;
With you all saved and won ; without, all lost.

SCENE I DREAMS ARE MADE OF

That former recognition of your right
Grant but a dream, if you will have it so ;
Great things forecast themselves by shadows great :
Or will you have it, this like that dream too,
People, and place, and time itself, all dream—
Yet, being in't, and as the shadows come
Quicker and thicker than you can escape,
Adopt your visionary soldiery,
Who, having struck a solid chain away,
Now put an airy sword into your hand,
And harnessing you piece-meal till you stand
Amidst us all complete in glittering,
If unsubstantial, steel—

Rosaura (without). The Prince ! The Prince !
Capt. Who calls for him ?

Sol. The Page who spurr'd us hither,
And now, dismounted from a foaming horse—

Enter ROSAURA.

Rosaura. Where is—but where I need no
further ask
Where the majestic presence, all in arms,
Mutely proclaims and vindicates himself.

Fife. My darling Lady-lord—

Ros. My own good Fife,
Keep to my side—and silence !—Oh, my Lord,
For the third time behold me here where first
You saw me, by a happy misadventure
Losing my own way here to find it out
For you to follow with these loyal men,

Adding the moment of my little cause
To yours ; which, so much mightier as it is,
By a strange chance runs hand in hand with mine ;
The self-same foe who now pretends your right,
Withholding mine—that, of itself alone,
I know the royal blood that runs in you
Would vindicate, regardless of your own :
The right of injured innocence ; and, more,
Spite of this epicene attire, a woman's ;
And of a noble stock I will not name
Till I, who brought it, have retrieved the shame.
Whom Duke Astolfo, Prince of Muscovy,
With all the solemn vows of wedlock won,
And would have wedded, as I do believe,
Had not the cry of Poland for a Prince
Call'd him from Muscovy to join the prize
Of Poland with the fair Estrella's eyes.
I, following him hither, as you saw,
Was cast upon these rocks ; arrested by
Clotaldo : who, for an old debt of love
He owes my family, with all his might
Served, and had served me further, till my cause
Clash'd with his duty to his sovereign,
Which, as became a loyal subject, sir,
(And never sovereign had a loyaller,)
Was still his first. He carried me to Court,
Where, for the second time, I cross'd your path ;
Where, as I watch'd my opportunity,
Suddenly broke this public passion out ;
Which, drowning private into public wrong,
Yet swiftness sweeps it to revenge along.

Seg. Oh God, if this be dreaming, charge it not
To burst the channel of enclosing sleep
And drown the waking reason ! Not to dream
Only what dreamt shall once or twice again
Return to buzz about the sleeping brain
Till shaken off for ever—
But reassailing one so quick, so thick—
The very figure and the circumstance
Of sense-confess'd reality foregone
In so-call'd dream so palpably repeated,
The copy so like the original,
We know not which is which ; and dream so-
call'd

Itself inweaving so inextricably
Into the tissue of acknowledged truth ;
The very figures that empeople it
Returning to assert themselves no phantoms
In something so much like meridian day,
And in the very place that not my worst
And veriest disenchanter shall deny
For the too well-remember'd theatre
Of my long tragedy—Strike up the drums !
If this be Truth, and all of us awake,
Indeed a famous quarrel is at stake :
If but a Vision I will see it out,
And, drive the Dream, I can but join the rout.

Capt. And in good time, sir, for a palpable
Touchstone of truth and rightful vengeance too,
Here is Clotaldo taken.

Soldiers. In with him !
In with the traitor ! *(Clotaldo brought in.)*

Seg. Ay, Clotaldo, indeed—
Himself—in his old habit—his old self—
What ! back again, Clotaldo, for a while
To swear me this for truth, and afterwards
All for a dreaming lie ?

Cló. Awake or dreaming,
Down with that sword, and down these traitors
theirs,
Drawn in rebellion 'gainst their Sovereign.

Seg. (about to strike). Traitor ! Traitor yourself !
—But soft—soft—soft !—
You told me, not so very long ago,
Awake or dreaming—I forget—my brain
Is not so clear about it—but I know
One test you gave me to discern between,
Which mad and dreaming people cannot master ;
Or if the dreamer could, so best secure
A comfortable waking—Was't not so ?—
(*To Rosaura*). Needs not your intercession now,
you see,
As in the dream before—
Clotaldo, rough old nurse and tutor too
That only traitor wert, to me if true—
Give him his sword ; set him on a fresh horse ;
Conduct him safely through my rebel force ;
And so God speed him to his sovereign's side !
Give me your hand ; and whether all awake
Or all a-dreaming, ride, Clotaldo, ride—
Dream-swift—for fear we dreams should overtake.

(*A Battle may be supposed to take place ; after which*)

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

SCENE II.—*A wooded pass near the field of battle : drums, trumpets, firing, &c. Cries of ‘ God save Basilio ! Segismund,’ &c.*

Enter FIFE, running.

Fife. God save them both, and save them all !
say I !—

Oh—what hot work !—Whichever way one turns
The whistling bullet at one’s ears—I’ve drifted
Far from my mad young—master—whom I saw
Tossing upon the very crest of battle,
Beside the Prince—God save her first of all !
With all my heart I say and pray—and so
Commend her to His keeping—bang !—bang !
—bang !—

And for myself—scarce worth His thinking of—
I’ll see what I can do to save myself
Behind this rock, until the storm blows over.

(Skirmishes, shouts, firing, &c. After some time enter KING BASILIO, ASTOLFO, and CLOTALDO.)

King. The day is lost !

Ast. Do not despair—the rebels—

King. Alas ! the vanquish’d only are the rebels.

Clotaldo. Ev’n if this battle lost us, ’tis but one
Gain’d on their side, if you not lost in it ;
Another moment and too late : at once
Take horse, and to the capital, my liege,

Where in some safe and holy sanctuary
Save Poland in your person.

Ast. Be persuaded :
You know your son : have tasted of his temper ;
At his first onset threatening unprovoked
The crime predicted for his last and worst.
How whetted now with such a taste of blood,
And thus far conquest !

King. Ay, and how he fought !
Oh how he fought, Astolfo ; ranks of men
Falling as swathes of grass before the mower ;
I could but pause to gaze at him, although,
Like the pale horseman of the Apocalypse,
Each moment brought him nearer—Yet I say,
I could but pause and gaze on him, and pray
Poland had such a warrior for her king.

Ast. The cry of triumph on the other side
Gains ground upon us here—there's but a moment
For you, my liege, to do, for me to speak,
Who back must to the field, and what man may,
Do, to retrieve the fortune of the day. (*Firing.*)

Fife (falling forward, shot). Oh, Lord, have
mercy on me.

King. What a shriek—
Oh, some poor creature wounded in a cause
Perhaps not worth the loss of one poor life !—
So young too—and no soldier—

Fife. A poor lad,
Who choosing play at hide and seek with death,
Just hid where death just came to look for him ;
For there's no place, I think, can keep him out,

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Once he's his eye upon you. All grows dark—
You glitter finely too—Well—we are dreaming—
But when the bullet's off—Heav'n save the mark !
So tell my mister—mastress— (Dies.)

King. Oh God ! How this poor creature's
ignorance

Confounds our so-call'd wisdom ! Even now
When death has stopt his lips, the wound through
which

His soul went out, still with its bloody tongue
Preaching how vain our struggle against fate !

(Voices within). After them ! After them !

This way ! This way !

The day is ours—Down with Basilio, &c.

Ast. Fly, sir—

King. And slave-like flying not out-ride
The fate which better like a King abide !

Enter SEGISMUND, ROSAURA, SOLDIERS, &c.

Segismund. Where is the King ?

King (*prostrating himself*). Behold him,—by
this late

Anticipation of resistless fate,
Thus underneath your feet his golden crown,
And the white head that wears it, laying down,
His fond resistance hope to expiate.

Segismund. Princes and warriors of Poland—you
That stare on this unnatural sight aghast,
Listen to one who, Heav'n-inspired to do
What in its secret wisdom Heav'n forecast,

By that same Heav'n instructed prophet-wise
To justify the present in the past.
What in the sapphire volume of the skies
Is writ by God's own finger misleads none,
But him whose vain and misinstructed eyes,
They mock with misinterpretation,
Or who, mistaking what he rightly read,
Ill commentary makes, or misapplies
Thinking to shirk or thwart it. Which has done
The wisdom of this venerable head ;
Who, well provided with the secret key
To that gold alphabet, himself made me,
Himself, I say, the savage he fore-read
Fate somehow should be charged with ; nipp'd
the growth
Of better nature in constraint and sloth,
That only bring to bear the seed of wrong,
And turn'd the stream to fury whose out-burst
Had kept his lawful channel uncoerced,
And fertilized the land he flow'd along.
Then like to some unskilful duellist,
Who having over-reach'd himself pushing too hard
His foe, or but a moment off his guard—
What odds, when Fate is one's antagonist !—
Nay, more, this royal father, self-dismay'd
At having Fate against himself array'd,
Upon himself the very sword he knew
Should wound him, down upon his bosom drew,
That might well handled, well have wrought ;
or, kept
Undrawn, have harmless in the scabbard slept.

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

But Fate shall not by human force be broke,
 Nor foil'd by human feint ; the Secret learn'd
 Against the scholar by that master turn'd
 Who to himself reserves the master-stroke.
 Witness whereof this venerable Age,
 Thrice crown'd as Sire, and Sovereign, and Sage,
 Down to the very dust dishonour'd by
 The very means he tempted to defy
 The irresistible. And shall not I,
 Till now the mere dumb instrument that wrought
 The battle Fate has with my father fought,
 Now the mere mouth-piece of its victory—
 Oh, shall not I, the champion's sword laid down,
 Be yet more shamed to wear the teacher's gown,
 And, blushing at the part I had to play,
 Down where that honour'd head I was to lay
 By this more just submission of my own,
 The treason Fate has forced on me atone ?

King. Oh, Segismund, in whom I see indeed,
 Out of the ashes of my self-extinction
 A better self revive ; if not beneath
 Your feet, beneath your better wisdom bow'd,
 The Sovereignty of Poland I resign,
 With this its golden symbol ; which if thus
 Saved with its silver head inviolate,
 Shall nevermore be subject to decline ;
 But when the head that it alights on now
 Falls honour'd by the very foe that must,
 As all things mortal, lay it in the dust,
 Shall star-like shift to his successor's brow.

Shouts, trumpets, &c. God save King Segismund !

Seg.

For what remains—

As for my own, so for my people's peace,
Astolfo's and Estrella's plighted hands
I disunite, and taking hers to mine,
His to one yet more dearly his resign.

Shouts, &c. God save Estrella, Queen of Poland !

Seg. (to Clotaldo).

You

That with unflinching duty to your King,
Till countermanded by the mightier Power,
Have held your Prince a captive in the tower,
Henceforth as strictly guard him on the throne,
No less my people's keeper than my own.¹

You stare upon me all, amazed to hear
The word of civil justice from such lips
As never yet seem'd tuned to such discourse.
But listen—In that same enchanted tower,
Not long ago I learn'd it from a dream
Expounded by this ancient prophet here ;
And which he told me, should it come again,
How I should bear myself beneath it ; not

¹ In Calderon's drama, the Soldier who liberates Segismund meets with even worse recompence than in the version below. I suppose some such saving clause against prosperous treason was necessary in the days of Philip IV., if not later.

Capt. And what for him, my liege, who made you free
To honour him who held you prisoner ?

Seg. By such self-proclamation self-betray'd
Less to your Prince's service or your King's
Loyal, than to the recompence it brings ;
The tower he leaves I make you keeper of
For life—and, mark you, not to leave alive ;
For treason may, but not the traitor, thrive.

SCENE II DREAMS ARE MADE OF

As then with angry passion all on fire,
 Arguing and making a distemper'd soul ;
 But ev'n with justice, mercy, self-control,
 As if the dream I walk'd in were no dream,
 And conscience one day to account for it.
 A dream it was in which I thought myself,
 And you that hail'd me now then hail'd me King,
 In a brave palace that was all my own,
 Within, and all without it, mine ; until,
 Drunk with excess of majesty and pride,
 Methought I tower'd so high and swell'd so wide,
 That of myself I burst the glittering bubble,
 That my ambition had about me blown,
 And all again was darkness. Such a dream
 As this in which I may be walking now ;
 Dispensing solemn justice to you shadows,
 Who make believe to listen ; but anon,
 With all your glittering arms and equipage,
 King, princes, captains, warriors, plume and steel,
 Ay, ev'n with all your airy theatre,
 May flit into the air you seem to rend
 With acclamation, leaving me to wake
 In the dark tower ; or dreaming that I wake
 From this that waking is ; or this and that
 Both waking or both dreaming ; such a doubt
 Confounds and clouds our mortal life about.
 And, whether wake or dreaming, this I know,
 How dream-wise human glories come and go ;
 Whose momentary tenure not to break,
 Walking as one who knows he soon may wake
 So fairly carry the full cup, so well

AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF ACT III

Disorder'd insolence and passion quell,
That there be nothing after to upbraid
Dreamer or doer in the part he play'd,
Whether To-morrow's dawn shall break the spell,
Or the Last Trumpet of the eternal Day,
When Dreaming with the Night shall pass away.
[*Exeunt.*]

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DURING the time of my pretending to practise Medicine at Cambridge, I was aroused, one fine forenoon of May, by the sound of some one coming up my staircase, two or three steps at a time it seemed to me ; then, directly after, a smart rapping at the door ; and, before I could say, ‘Come in,’ Euphranor had opened it, and, striding up to me, seized my arm with his usual eagerness, and told me I must go out with him — ‘It was such a day—sun shining—breeze blowing—hedges and trees in full leaf.—He had been to Chesterton, (he said,) and pull’d back with a man who now left him in the lurch ; and I must take his place.’ I told him what a poor hand at the oar I was, and, such walnut-shells as these Cambridge boats were, I was sure a strong fellow like him must rejoice in getting a whole Eight-oar to himself once in a while. He laughed, and said, ‘The pace, the pace was the thing—However, that was all nothing, but—in short, I must go with him, whether for a row, or a walk in the fields, or a game of Billiards at

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Chesterton—whatever I liked—only go I must.’ After a little more banter, about some possible Patients, I got up ; closed some very weary medical Treatise I was reading ; on with coat and hat ; and in three minutes we had run downstairs, out into the open air ; where both of us calling out together ‘What a day !’ it was, we struck out briskly for the old Wooden Bridge, where Euphranor said his boat was lying.

‘By-the-bye,’ said I, as we went along, ‘it would be a charity to knock up poor Lexilogus, and carry him along with us.’

Not much of a charity, Euphranor thought—Lexilogus would so much rather be left with his books. Which I declared was the very reason he should be taken from them ; and Euphranor, who was quite good-humour’d, and wish’d Lexilogus all well, (for we were all three Yorkshiremen, whose families lived no great distance asunder,) easily consented. So, without more ado, we turn’d into Trinity Great gate, and round by the right up a staircase to the attic where Lexilogus kept.

The door was *sported*, as they say, but I knew he must be within ; so, using the privilege of an old friend, I shouted to him through the letter-slit. Presently we heard the sound of books falling, and soon after Lexilogus’ thin, pale, and spectacled face appear’d at the half-open’d door. He was always glad to see me, I believe, howsoever I disturb’d him ; and he smiled as he laid

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his hand in mine, rather than return'd its pressure : working hard, as he was, poor fellow, for a Fellowship that should repay all the expense of sending him to College.

The tea-things were still on the table, and I asked him (though I knew well enough) if he were so fashionable as only just to have break-fasted ?

‘ Oh — long ago — directly after morning Chapel.’

I then told him he must put his books away, and come out on the river with Euphranor and myself.

‘ He could not possibly,’ he thought ;—‘ not so early, at least—preparing for some Examination, or course of Lectures——’

‘ Come, come, my good fellow,’ said Euphranor, ‘ that is the very reason, says the Doctor ; and he will have his way. So make haste.’

I then told him (what I then suddenly remember'd) that, beside other reasons, his old Aunt, a Cambridge tradesman's widow whom I attended, and whom Lexilogus help'd to support out of his own little savings, wanted to see him on some business. He should go with us to Chesterton, where she lodged ; visit her while Euphranor and I play'd a game or two of Billiards at the Inn ; and afterwards (for I knew how little of an oars-man he was) we would all three take a good stretch into the Fields together.

He supposed ‘ we should be back in good

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time' ; about which I would make no condition ; and he then resign'd himself to Destiny. While he was busy changing and brushing his clothes, Euphranor, who had walk'd somewhat impatiently about the room, looking now at the books, and now through the window at some white pigeons wheeling about in the clear sky, went up to the mantelpiece and call'd out, 'What a fine new pair of screens Lexilogus had got ! the present, doubtless, of some fair Lady.'

Lexilogus said they were a present from his sister on his birthday ; and coming up to me, brush in hand, asked if I recognised the views represented on them ?

'Quite well, quite well,' I said—'the old Church—the Yew tree—the Parsonage—one cannot mistake them.'

'And were they not beautifully done ?'

And I answer'd without hesitation, 'they were' ; for I knew the girl who had painted them, and that (whatever they might be in point of Art) a still finer spirit had guided her hand.

At last, after a little hesitation as to whether he should wear cap and gown, (which I decided he should, for this time only, *not*) Lexilogus was ready : and calling out on the staircase to some invisible Bed-maker, that his books should not be meddled with, we ran downstairs, crossed the Great Court—through the Screens, as they are call'd, perpetually travers'd by Gyp, Cook, Bed-maker, and redolent of perpetual Dinner ;—and

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so, through the cloisters of Nevile's Court, out upon the open green before the Library. The sun shone broad on the new-shaven expanse of grass, while holiday-seeming people saunter'd along the River-side, and under the trees, now flourishing in freshest green—the Chestnut especially in full fan, and leaning down his white cones over the sluggish current, which seem'd indeed fitter for the slow merchandise of coal, than to wash the walls and flow through the groves of Academe.

We now consider'd that we had miss'd our proper point of embarkation ; but this was easily set right at a slight expense of College propriety. Euphranor calling out to some one who had his boat in charge along with others by the wooden bridge, we descended the grassy slope, stepp'd in, with due caution on the part of Lexilogus and myself, and settled the order of our voyage. Euphranor and I were to pull, and Lexilogus (as I at first proposed) to steer. But seeing he was somewhat shy of meddling in the matter, I agreed to take all the blame of my own awkwardness on myself.

‘ And just take care of this, will you, Lexilogus ? ’ said Euphranor, handing him a book which fell out of the pocket of the coat he was taking off.

‘ Oh, books, books ! ’ I exclaimed. ‘ I thought we were to steer clear of them, at any rate. Now we shall have Lexilogus reading all the

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way, instead of looking about him, and inhaling the fresh air unalloy'd. What is it — Greek, Algebra, German, or what ?'

'None of these, however,' Euphranor said, 'but only Digby's Godefridus ;' and then asking me whether I was ready, and I calling out, 'Ay, ay, Sir,' our oars plash'd in the water. Safe through the main arch of Trinity bridge, we shot past the Library, I exerting myself so strenuously (as bad rowers are apt to do), that I almost drove the boat upon a very unobtrusive angle of the College buildings. This danger past, however, we got on better ; Euphranor often looking behind him to anticipate our way, and counteracting with his experienced oar the many misdirections of mine. Amid all this, he had leisure to ask me if I knew those same Digby books ?

'Some of them,' I told him—'the "Broad Stone of Honour," for one ; indeed I had the first Protestant edition of it, now very rare.'

'But not so good as the enlarged Catholic,' said Euphranor, 'of which this Godefridus is part.'

'Perhaps not,' I replied ; 'but then, on the other hand, *not* so Catholic ; which you and Lexilogus will agree with me is much in its favour.'

Which I said slyly, because of Euphranor's being rather taken with the Oxford doctrine just then coming into vogue.

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‘You cannot forgive him that,’ said he.

‘Nay, nay,’ said I, ‘one can forgive a true man anything.’

And then Euphranor ask’d me, ‘Did I not remember Digby himself at College?—perhaps know him?’

‘Not *that*,’ I answer’d, ‘but remember’d him very well. A grand, swarthy Fellow, who might have stept out of the canvas of some knightly portrait in his Father’s hall—perhaps the living image of one sleeping under some cross-legg’d Effigies in the Church.’

‘And, Hare says, really the Knight at heart that he represented in his Books.’

‘At least,’ I answered, ‘he pull’d a very good stroke on the river, where I am now labouring so awkwardly.’

In which and other such talk, interrupted by the little accidents of our voyage, we had threaded our way through the closely-packt barges at Magdalen; through the Locks; and so for a pull of three or four miles down the river and back again to the Ferry; where we surrender’d our boat, and footed it over the fields to Chesterton, at whose Church we came just as its quiet chimes were preluding Twelve o’clock. Close by was the humble house whither Lexilogus was bound. I look’d in for a moment at the old lady, and left him with her, privately desiring him to join us as soon as he could at the Three Tuns Inn, which I preferr’d to any younger rival, because

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of the many pleasant hours I had spent there in my own College days, some twenty years ago.

When Euphranor and I got there, we found all the tables occupied ; but one, as usual, would be at our service before long. Meanwhile, ordering some light ale after us, we went into the Bowling-green, with its Lilac bushes now in full bloom and full odour ; and there we found, sitting alone upon a bench, Lycion, with a cigar in his mouth, and rolling the bowls about lazily with his foot.

‘What ! Lycion ! and all alone !’ I call’d out.

He nodded to us both—waiting, he said, till some men had finish’d a pool of billiards upstairs—a great bore—for it was only just begun ! and one of the fellows ‘a man I particularly detest.’

‘Come and console yourself with some ale, then,’ said I. ‘Are you ever foolish enough to go pulling on the river, as we have been doing ?’

‘Not very often in hot weather ; he did not see the use,’ he said, ‘of perspiring to no purpose.’

‘Just so,’ replied I, ‘though Euphranor has not turn’d a hair, you see, owing to the good condition he is in. But here comes our liquor ; and “Sweet is Pleasure after Pain,” at any rate.’

We then sat down in one of those little arbours cut into the Lilac bushes round the Bowling-green ; and while Euphranor and I were quaffing each a glass of Home-brew’d,

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Lycion took up the volume of Digby, which Euphranor had laid on the table.

‘Ah, Lycion,’ said Euphranor, putting down his glass, ‘there is one would have put you up to a longer and stronger pull than we have had to-day.’

‘Chivalry——’ said Lycion, glancing carelessly over the leaves; ‘Don’t you remember,’—addressing me—‘what an absurd thing that Eglinton Tournament was? What a complete failure? There was the Queen of Beauty on her throne—Lady Seymour—who alone of all the whole affair was *not* a sham—and the Heralds, and the Knights in full Armour on their horses—they had been practising for months, I believe—but unluckily, at the very moment of Onset, the rain began, and the Knights threw down their lances, and put up their umbrellas.’

I laugh’d, and said I remembered something like it had occur’d, though not to that umbrella-point, which I thought was a theatrical, or Louis Philippe Burlesque on the affair. And I asked Euphranor ‘what he had to say in defence of the Tournament.’

‘Nothing at all,’ he replied. ‘It *was* a silly thing, and fit to be laughed at for the very reason that it *was* a sham, as Lycion says. As Digby himself tells us,’ he went on, taking the Book, and rapidly turning over the leaves—‘Here it is’—and he read: “The error that leads men to doubt of this first proposition”—that is, you

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know, that Chivalry is not a thing past, but, like all things of Beauty, eternal—"the error that leads men to doubt of this first proposition consists in their supposing that Tournaments, and steel Panoply, and Coat arms, and Aristocratic institutions, are essential to Chivalry ; whereas, these are, in fact, only accidental attendants upon it, subject to the influence of Time, which changes all such things."'

'I suppose,' said Lycion, 'your man—whatever his name is—would carry us back to the days of King Arthur, and the Seven Champions, whenever they were—that one used to read about when a Child? I thought Don Quixote had put an end to all that long ago.'

'Well, *he*, at any rate,' said Euphranor, 'did not depend on fine Accoutrement for his Chivalry.'

'Nay,' said I, 'but did he *not* believe in his rusty armour—perhaps even the paste-board Visor he fitted to it—as impregnable as the Cause——'

'And some old Barber's bason as the Helmet of Mambrino,' interposed Lycion——

'And his poor Rocinante not to be surpass'd by the Baviaea of the Cid ; believed in all this, I say, as really as in the Windmills and Wine-skins being the Giants and Sorcerers he was to annihilate?'

'To be sure he did,' said Lycion ; 'but Euphranor's Round-table men—many of them

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great rascals, I believe—knew a real Dragon, or Giant—when they met him—better than Don Quixote.’

‘Perhaps, however,’ said I, who saw Euphranor’s colour rising, ‘he and Digby would tell us that all such Giants and Dragons may be taken for Symbols of certain Forms of Evil which his Knights went about to encounter and exterminate.’

‘Of course,’ said Euphranor, with an indignant snort, ‘every Child knows that : then as now to be met with and put down in whatsoever shapes they appear as long as Tyranny and Oppression exist.’

‘Till finally extinguisht, as they crop up, by Euphranor and his Successors,’ said Lycion.

‘Does not Carlyle somewhere talk to us of a “Chivalry of Labour”?’ said I; ‘that henceforward not “*Arms* and the Man,” but “*Tools* and the Man,” are to furnish the Epic of the world.’

‘Oh, well,’ said Lycion, ‘if the “Table-Round” turn into a Tailor’s Board—“Charge, Chester, charge!” say I—only not exorbitantly for the Coat you provide for us—which indeed, like true Knights, I believe you should provide for us gratis.’

‘Yes, my dear fellow,’ said I, laughing, ‘but then *You* must not sit idle, smoking your cigar, in the midst of it; but, as your Ancestors led on mail’d troops at Agincourt, so must you put

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yourself, shears in hand, at the head of this Host, and become what Carlyle calls "a Captain of Industry," a Master-tailor, leading on a host of Journeymen to fresh fields and conquests new.'

'Besides,' said Euphranor, who did not like Carlyle, nor relish this sudden descent of his hobby, 'surely Chivalry will never want a good Cause to maintain, whether private or public. As Tennyson says, King Arthur, who was carried away wounded to the island valley of Avilion, returns to us in the shape of a "modern Gentleman" who may be challenged, even in these later days, to no mock Tournament, Lycion, in his Country's defence, and with something other than the Doctor's shears at his side.'

To this Lycion, however, only turn'd his cigar in his mouth by way of reply, and look'd somewhat superciliously at his Antagonist. And I, who had been looking into the leaves of the Book that Euphranor had left open, said :

'Here we are, as usual, discussing without having yet agreed on the terms we are using. Euphranor has told us, on the word of his Hero, what Chivalry is *not* : let him read what it *is* that we are talking about.'

I then handed him the Book to read to us, while Lycion, lying down on the grass, with his hat over his eyes, composed himself to inattention. And Euphranor read :

"Chivalry is only a name for that general Spirit or state of mind, which disposes men to

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Heroic and Generous actions ; and keeps them conversant with all that is Beautiful and Sublime in the Intellectual and Moral world. It will be found that, in the absence of conservative principles, this Spirit more generally prevails in Youth than in the later periods of men's lives : and, as the Heroic is always the earliest age in the history of nations, so Youth, the first period of human life, may be considered as the Heroic or Chivalrous age of each separate Man ; and there are few so unhappy as to have grown up without having experienced its influence, and having derived the advantage of being able to enrich their imaginations, and to soothe their hours of sorrow, with its romantic recollections. The Anglo-Saxons distinguished the period between Childhood and Manhood by the term 'Cnihthade,' Knighthood : a term which still continued to indicate the connexion between Youth and Chivalry, when Knights were styled 'Children,' as in the historic song beginning

‘Child Rowland to the dark tower came :’

an excellent expression, no doubt ; for every Boy and Youth is, in his mind and sentiments, a Knight, and essentially a Son of Chivalry. Nature is fine in him. Nothing but the circumstance of a singular and most degrading system of Education can ever totally destroy the action of this general law. Therefore, as long as there has been, or shall be, a succession of sweet Springs in Man's

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Intellectual World ; as long as there have been, or shall be, Young men to grow up to maturity ; and until all Youthful life shall be dead, and its source withered for ever ; so long must there have been, and must there continue to be, the spirit of noble Chivalry. To understand therefore this first and, as it were, natural Chivalry, we have only to observe the features of the Youthful age, of which examples surround us. For, as Demipho says of young men :

‘ Ecce autem similia omnia : omnes congruunt :
Unum cognoris, omnes noris.’

Mark the courage of him who is green and fresh in this Old world. Amyntas beheld and dreaded the insolence of the Persians ; but not so Alexander, the son of Amyntas, ἄτε νέος τε ἐὼν, καὶ κακῶν ἀπαθής (says Herodotus) οὐδαμῶς ἔτι κατέχειν οἶός τε ἦν. When Jason had related to his companions the conditions imposed by the King, the first impression was that of horror and despondency : till Peleus rose up boldly, and said,

“Ωρη μητιῶασθαι ὃ κ’ ἔρξομεν οὐ μὲν ἔολπα
Βουλῆς εἶναι ὄνειρ, ὅσον τ’ ἐπὶ κάρτεϊ χειρῶν.

‘ If Jason be unwilling to attempt it, I and the rest will undertake the enterprise ; for what more can we suffer than death ? ’ And then instantly rose up Telamon and Idas, and the sons of Tyndarus, and Œnides, although

οὐδέ περ ὅσσον ἐπανθιόωντας ἰούλους
Ἄντέλλων.

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But Argus, the Nestor of the party, restrained their impetuous valour.”’

‘Scarce the Down upon their lips, you see,’ said I, ‘Freshmen ;—so that you, Euphranor, who are now Bachelor of Arts, and whose upper lip at least begins to show the stubble of repeated harvests, are, alas, fast declining from that golden prime of Knighthood, while Lycion here, whose shavings might almost be counted——’

Here Lycion, who had endured the reading with an occasional yawn, said he wish’d ‘those fellows upstairs would finish their pool.’

‘And see again,’ continued I, taking the book from Euphranor’s hands—‘after telling us that Chivalry is mainly but another name for Youth, Digby proceeds to define more particularly what *that* is—“It is a remark of Lord Bacon, that ‘for the Moral part, Youth will have the pre-eminence, as Age hath for the Politic ;’ and this has always been the opinion which is allied to that other belief, that the Heroic (the Homeric age) was the most Virtuous age of Greece. When Demosthenes is desirous of expressing any great and generous sentiment, he uses the term *νεανικὸν φρόνημα*”’—and by the way,’ added I, looking up parenthetically from the book, ‘the Persians, I am told, employ the same word for Youth and Courage—“and it is the saying of Plautus, when surprise is evinced at the Benevolence of an old man, ‘*Benignitas hujus ut Adolescentuli est.*’ There is no difference, says the Philosopher,

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between Youthful Age and Youthful Character ; and what this is cannot be better evinced than in the very words of Aristotle : ‘ The Young are ardent in Desire, and what they do is from Affection ; they are tractable and delicate ; they earnestly desire and are quickly appeased ; their wishes are intense, without comprehending much, as the thirst and hunger of the weary ; they are passionate and hasty, and liable to be surprised by anger ; for being ambitious of Honour, they cannot endure to be despised, but are indignant when they suffer injustice : they love Honour, but still more Victory ; for Youth desires superiority, and victory is superiority, and both of these they love more than Riches ; for as to these, of all things, they care for them the least. They are not of corrupt manners, but are Innocent, from not having beheld much wickedness ; and they are credulous, from having been seldom deceived ; and Sanguine in hope, for, like persons who are drunk with wine, they are inflamed by nature, and from their having had but little experience of Fortune. And they live by Hope, for Hope is of the future, but Memory of the past, and to Youth the Future is everything, the Past but little ; they hope all things, and remember nothing : and it is easy to deceive them, for the reasons which have been given ; for they are willing to hope, and are full of Courage, being passionate and hasty, of which tempers it is the nature of one not to fear, and

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of the other to inspire confidence ; and they are easily put to Shame, for they have no resources to set aside the precepts which they have learned : and they have lofty souls, for they have never been disgraced or brought low, and they are unacquainted with Necessity ; they prefer Honour to Advantage, Virtue to Expediency ; for they live by Affection rather than by Reason, and Reason is concerned with Expediency, but Affection with Honour : and they are warm friends and hearty companions, more than other men, because they delight in Fellowship, and judge of nothing by Utility, and therefore not their friends ; and they chiefly err in doing all things over much, for they keep no medium. They love much, and they dislike much, and so in everything, and this arises from their idea that they know everything. And their faults consist more in Insolence than in actual wrong ; and they are full of Mercy, because they regard all men as good, and more virtuous than they are ; for they measure others by their own Innocence ; so that they suppose every man suffers wrongfully.’” So that Lycion, you see,’ said I, looking up from the book, and tapping on the top of his hat, ‘is, in virtue of his eighteen Summers only, a Knight of Nature’s own dubbing—yes, and here we have a list of the very qualities which constitute him one of the Order. And all the time he is pretending to be careless, indolent, and worldly, he is really bursting

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with suppressed Energy, Generosity, and Devotion.'

'I did not try to understand your English any more than your Greek,' said Lycion; 'but if I can't help being the very fine Fellow whom I think you were reading about, why, I want to know what is the use of writing books about it for my edification.'

'O yes, my dear fellow,' said I, 'it is like giving you an Inventory of your goods, which else you lose, or even fling away, in your march to Manhood—which you are so eager to reach. Only to repent when gotten there; for I see Digby goes on—"What is termed *Entering the World*"—which Manhood of course must do—"assuming its Principles and Maxims"—which usually follows—"is nothing else but departing into those regions to which the souls of the Homeric Heroes went sorrowing—

“ὃν πότμον γούωσα, λιποῦσ' ἀδροτήτα καὶ ἥβην.”

'Ah, you remember,' said Euphranor, 'how Lamb's friend, looking upon the Eton Boys in their Cricket-field, sighed "to think of so many fine Lads so soon turning into frivolous Members of Parliament!"'

'But why "frivolous"?' said Lycion.

'Ay, why "frivolous"?' echoed I, 'when entering on the Field where, Euphranor tells us, their Knightly service may be call'd into action.'

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‘Perhaps,’ said Euphranor, ‘entering before sufficiently equipp’d for that part of their calling.’

‘Well,’ said Lycion, ‘the Laws of England determine otherwise, and that is enough for me, and, I suppose, for her, whatever your ancient or modern pedants say to the contrary.’

‘You mean,’ said I, ‘in settling Twenty-one as the Age of “Discretion,” sufficient to manage, not your own affairs only, but those of the Nation also?’

The hat nodded.

‘Not yet, perhaps, accepted for a Parliamentary Knight complete,’ said I, ‘so much as Squire to some more experienced, if not more valiant, Leader. Only providing that Neoptolemus do not fall into the hands of a too politic Ulysses, and under him lose that generous Moral, whose Inventory is otherwise apt to get lost among the benches of St. Stephen’s—in spite of preliminary Prayer.’

‘Aristotle’s Master, I think,’ added Euphranor, with some mock gravity, ‘would not allow any to become Judges in his Republic till near to middle life, lest acquaintance with Wrong should harden them into a distrust of Humanity: and acquaintance with Diplomacy is said to be little less dangerous.’

‘Though, by-the-way,’ interposed I, ‘was not Plato’s Master accused of perplexing those simple Affections and Impulses of Youth by his

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Dialectic, and making premature Sophists of the Etonians of Athens?’

‘By Aristophanes, you mean,’ said Euphranor, with no mock gravity now; ‘whose gross caricature help’d Anytus and Co. to that Accusation which ended in the murder of the best and wisest Man of all Antiquity.’

‘Well, perhaps,’ said I, ‘he had been sufficiently punish’d by that termagant Wife of his—whom, by-the-way, he may have taught to argue with him instead of to obey. Just as that Son of poor old Strepsiades, in what you call the Aristophanic Caricature, is taught to rebel against parental authority, instead of doing as he was bidden; as he would himself have the Horses to do that he was spending so much of his Father’s money upon: and as we would have our own Horses, Dogs, and Children,—and young Knights.’

‘You have got your Heroes into fine company, Euphranor,’ said Lycion, who, while seeming inattentive to all that went against him, was quick enough to catch at any turn in his favour.

‘Why, let me see,’ said I, taking up the book again, and running my eye over the passage—‘yes,—“*Ardent of desire*,”—“*Tractable*,”—some of them at least—“*Without comprehending much*”—“*Ambitious*”—“*Despisers of Riches*”—*Warm friends and hearty Companions*’—really very characteristic of the better breed of Dogs and

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Horses. And why not? The Horse, you know, has given his very name to Chivalry, because of his association in the Heroic Enterprises of Men,—*El mas Hidalgo Bruto*, Calderon calls him. He was sometimes buried, I think, along with our heroic Ancestors—just as some favourite wife was buried along with her husband in the East. So the Muse sings of those who believe their faithful Dog will accompany them to the World of Spirits—as even some wise and good Christian men have thought it not impossible he may, not only because of his Moral, but——’

‘Well,’ said Euphranor, ‘we need not trouble ourselves about carrying the question quite so far.’

‘Oh, do not drop your poor kinsman just when you are going into good Company,’ said Lycion.

‘By-the-way, Lycion,’ said I, ‘has not your Parliament a “Whipper-in” of its more dilatory members—or of those often of the younger ones, I think, who may be diverting themselves with some stray scent elsewhere?’

To this he only replied with a long whiff from his Cigar; but Euphranor said:

‘Well, come, Lycion, let us take the Doctor at his word, and turn it against himself. For if you and I, in virtue of our Youth, are so inspired with all this Moral that he talks of—why, we—or, rather, you—*are* wanted in Parliament, not

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only to follow like Dog and Horse, as he pretends, but also to take the lead ; so as the Generous counsel, the *νεανικὸν φρόνημα*, of Youth, may vivify and ennoble the cold Politic of Age.'

'Well, I remember hearing of a young Senator,' said I, 'who, in my younger days, was celebrated for his faculty of Cock-crowing by way of waking up his more drowsy Seniors, I suppose, about the small hours of the morning—or, perhaps, in token of Victory over an unexpected Minority.'

'No, no,' said Euphranor, laughing, 'I mean seriously ; as in the passage we read from Digby, Amyntas, the Man of Policy, was wrong, and his son Alexander right.'

But oddly enough, as I remember'd the story in Herodotus, by a device which smack'd more of Policy than Generosity. 'But in the other case, Argus, I suppose, was not so wrong in restraining the impetuosity of his Youthful Crew, who,—is it not credibly thought?—would have fail'd, but for Medea's unexpected magical assistance.'

Euphranor was not clear about this.

'Besides,' said I, 'does not this very *νεανικὸν φρόνημα* of yours result from that *νεανικόν* condition—*ἔθος*, do you call it?—of Body, in which Youth as assuredly profits as in the Moral, and which assuredly flows, as from a Fountain of "Jouvence that rises and runs in the open" Field rather than in the Hall of St. Stephen's, where indeed it is

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rather likely to get clogg'd, if not altogether dried up? As, for instance, *Animal Spirit*, *Animal Courage*, *Sanguine Temper*, and so forth—all which, by the way, says Aristotle, inflame Youth not at all like Reasonable people, but “*like persons drunk with wine*”—all which, for better or worse, is fermented by Cricket from good Roast Beef into pure Blood, Muscle—and Moral.’

‘Chivalry refined into patent Essence of Beef!’ said Euphranor, only half-amused.

‘I hope you like the taste of it,’ said Lycion, under his hat.

‘Well, at any rate,’ said I, laughing, ‘those young Argonauts needed a good stock of it to work a much heavier craft than we have been pulling to-day, when the wind fail’d them. And yet, with all their animal Inebriation—whence-soever derived—so tractable in their Moral as to submit at once to their Politic Leader—Argus, was it not?’

‘“The Nestor of the Party,” Digby calls him,’ said Euphranor, ‘good, old, garrulous, Nestor, whom, somehow, I think one seems to feel more at home with than any of the Homeric Heroes.’

‘Ay, *he* was entitled to crow in the Grecian Parliament, fine “Old Cock” as he was, about the gallant exploits of his Youth, being at three-score so active in Body as in Spirit, that Agamemnon declares, I think, that Troy would soon

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come down had he but a few more such Generals. Ah yes, Euphranor ! could one by so full Apprenticeship of Youth become so thoroughly season'd with its Spirit, that all the Reason of Manhood, and Politic of Age, and Experience of the World, should serve not to freeze, but to direct, the genial Current of the Soul, so that—

“ Ev'n while the vital Heat retreats below,
Ev'n while the hoary head is lost in Snow,
The *Life* is in the leaf, and still between
The fits of falling Snow appears the streaky Green ”—

that Boy's Heart within the Man's never ceasing to throb and tremble, even to remotest Age—then indeed your Senate would need no other Youth than its Elders to vivify their counsel, or could admit the Young without danger of corrupting them by ignoble Policy.'

'Well, come,' said Euphranor gaily, after my rather sententious peroration, 'Lycion need not be condemn'd to enter Parliament—or even “The World”—unless he pleases, for some twenty years to come, if he will follow Pythagoras, who, you know, Doctor, devotes the first forty years of his Man's allotted Eighty to Childhood and Youth ; a dispensation which you and I at least shall not quarrel with.'

'No, nor anyone else, I should suppose,' said I. 'Think, my dear Lycion, what a privilege for you to have yet more than twenty good years' expatiation in the Elysian Cricket-field of Youth

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before pent up in that Close Borough of your Father's ! And Euphranor, whom we thought fast slipping out of his Prime as his Youth attained a beard, is in fact only just entering upon it. And, most wonderful of all, I, who not only have myself enter'd the World, but made my bread by bringing others into it these fifteen years, have myself only just ceased to be a Boy !'

What reply Lycion might have deign'd to all this, I know not ; for just now one of his friends looked out again from the Billiard-room window, and called out to him, 'the coast was clear.' On which Lycion getting up, and muttering something about its being a pity we did not go back to Trap-ball, and I retorting that we could carry it forward into Life with us, he carelessly nodded to us both, and with an '*Au Revoir*' lounged with his Cigar into the house.

Then Euphranor and I took each a draught of the good liquor which Lycion had declined to share with us ; and, on setting down his tumbler, he said :

' Ah ! you should have heard our friend Skythrops commenting on that Inventory of Youth as you call it, which he happen'd to open upon in my rooms the other day.'

' Perhaps the book is rather apt to open there of its own accord,' said I. ' Well—and what did Skythrops say ?'

' " Oh, you may anticipate—" the same old Heathen talk,"' he said—" very well for a Pagan to

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write, and a Papist to quote"—and, according to you, Doctor, for Horse and Dog to participate in, and for Bullock to supply.'

'But I had been mainly bantering Lycion,' I said; 'as Euphranor also, I supposed, with his Pythagorean disposition of Life. Lycion would not much have cared had I derived them from the angels. As for that Animal condition to which I had partly referr'd them, we Doctors were of old notorious on that score, not choosing your Moralist and Philosopher to carry off all the fee. But, "The Cobbler to his Last"—or, the Tailor to his Goose, if I might be call'd in, as only I profess'd, to accommodate the outer Man with what Sterne calls his Jerkin, leaving its Lining to your Philosopher and Divine.'

'Sterne!' ejaculated Euphranor; 'just like him—Soul and Body all of a piece.'

'Nay, nay,' said I, laughing; 'your Lining is often of a finer material, you know.'

'And often of a coarser, as in Sterne's own case, I believe.'

'Well, then, I would turn Mason, or Brick-layer,' I said; 'and confine myself to the House of Clay, in which, as the Poets tell us, the Soul is Tenant—"The Body's Guest"—as Sir Walter Raleigh calls him; would that do?'

'Better, at any rate, than Jerkin and Lining.'

But here the same difficulty presented itself. For, however essentially distinct the Tenant from his Lodging, his Health, as we of the material

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Faculty believed, in some measure depended on the salubrity of the House, in which he is not merely a Guest, but a Prisoner, and from which I knew Euphranor thought he was forbidden to escape by any violent self-extrication. Dryden indeed tells us of—

‘“ A fiery Soul that, working out his way,
Fretted the pigmy Body to decay,
And o’er-inform’d this Tenement of Clay.”’—

‘But *that* was the Soul of an Achitophel,’ Euphranor argued, ‘whose collapse, whether beginning from within or without, was of less than little moment to the world. But the truly grand Soul possesses himself in peace, or, if he suffer from self-neglect, or over-exertion in striving after the good of others—why, that same Dryden—or Waller, it may be—says that such an one becomes, not weaker, but stronger, by that Bodily decay, whether of Infirmary, or of Old Age, which lets in new light through the chinks of dilapidation—if not, as my loftier Wordsworth has it, some rays of that Original Glory which he brought with him to be darken’d in the Body at Birth.’

‘But then,’ I said, ‘if your crazy Cottage won’t fall to pieces at once, but, after the manner of creaking gates, go creaking—or, as the Sailors say of their boats, “complaining” on—making the Tenant, and most likely all his Neighbours, complain also, and perpetually calling on the

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Tenant for repairs, and this when he wants to be about other more important Business of his own? To think how much time—and patience—a Divine Soul has to waste over some little bit of Cheese, perhaps, that, owing to bad drainage, will stick in the stomach of an otherwise Seraphic Doctor.'

Euphranor laughed a little ; and I went on : ' Better surely, for all sakes, to build up for her—as far as we may—for we cannot yet ensure the foundation—a spacious, airy, and wholesome Tenement becoming so Divine a Tenant, of so strong a foundation and masonry as to resist the wear and tear of Elements without, and herself within. Yes ; and a *handsome* house withal—unless indeed you think the handsome Soul will fashion that about herself from within—like a shell—which, so far as her Top-storey, where she is supposed chiefly to reside, I think may be the case.'

' Ah,' said Euphranor, ' one of the most beautiful of all human Souls, as I think, could scarce accomplish that.'

' Socrates ?' said I. ' No ; but did not he profess that his Soul was naturally an ugly soul to begin with ? So, by the time he had beautified her within, it was too late to re-front her Outside, which had case-hardened, I suppose. But did not he accompany Alcibiades, not only because of his Spiritual, but also of his Physical Beauty, in which, as in the Phidian statues, the

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Divine Original of Man was supposed to reflect Himself, and which has been accepted as such by Christian Art, and indeed by all Peoples who are furthest removed from that of the Beast ? ’

‘ Even of Dog and Horse ? ’ said Euphranor, smiling.

‘ Even my sturdy old Philosopher Montaigne—who, by the way, declares that he rates “ *La Beauté à deux doigts de la Bonté...non seulement aux hommes qui me servent, mais aux bêtes aussi ;* ” quotes your Aristotle, saying that we owe a sort of Homage to those who resemble the Statues of the Gods as to the Statues themselves. And thus Socrates may have felt about Alcibiades, who, in those earlier and better days when Socrates knew him, might almost be taken as a counterpart of the Picture of Youth, with all its Virtues and defects, which Aristotle has drawn for us.’

‘ Or, what do you say, Doctor, to Aristotle’s own Pupil, Alexander, who turned out a yet more astonishing Phenomenon ?—I wonder, Doctor, what you, with all your theories, would have done had such an “ *Enfant terrible* ” as either of them been put into your hands.’

‘ Well, at any rate, I should have the advantage of first laying hold of him on coming into the World, which was not the case with Aristotle, or with the Doctors of his time, was it ? ’

Euphranor thought not.

‘ However, I know not yet whether I have

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ever had an Infant Hero of any kind to deal with ; none, certainly, who gave any indication of any such “clouds of glory” as your Wordsworth tells of, even when just arrived from their several homes—in Alexander’s case, of a somewhat sulphureous nature, according to Skythrops, I doubt. No, nor of any young Wordsworth neither under our diviner auspices.’

‘Nay, but,’ said Euphranor, ‘he tells us that our Birth is but a “Sleep and a Forgetting” of something which must take some waking-time to develop.’

‘But which, if I remember aright, is to begin to darken “with shades of the Prison-house,” as Wordsworth calls it, that begin to close about “the growing Boy.” But I am too much of a Philistine, as you Germans have it, to comprehend the Transcendental. All I know is, that I have not yet detected any signs of the “Heaven that lies about our Infancy,” nor for some while after—no, not even peeping through those windows through which the Soul is said more immediately to look, but as yet with no more speculation in them than those of the poor whelp of the Dog we talked of—in spite of a nine days’ start of him.’

‘Nevertheless,’ said Euphranor, ‘I have heard tell of another Poet’s saying that he knew of no human out-look so solemn as that from an Infant’s Eyes ; and how it was from those of his own he learn’d that those of the Divine Child in

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Raffaelle's Sistine Madonna were not over-charged with expression, as he had previously thought they might be.'

'I think,' said I, 'you must have heard of that from me, who certainly did hear something like it from the Poet himself, who used to let fall—not lay down—the word that settled the question, æsthetic or other, which others hammer'd after in vain. Yes; that was on occasion, I think, of his having watch'd his Child one morning "*worshipping the Sunbeam on the Bed-post*"—I suppose the worship of Wonder, such as I have heard grown-up Children tell of at first sight of the Alps, or Niagara; or such stay-at-home Islanders as ourselves at first sight of the Sea, from such a height as Flamborough Head.'

'Some farther-seeing Wonder than dog or kitten are conscious of, at any rate,' said Euphranor.

'Ah, who knows? I have seen both of them watching that very Sunbeam too—the Kitten perhaps playing with it, to be sure. If but the Philosopher or Poet could live in the Child's or kitten's Brain for a while! The Bed-post Sunworship, however, was of a Child of several months—and Raffaelle's—a full year old, would you say?'

'Nay, you know about such matters better than I,' said Euphranor, laughing.

'Well, however it may be with young Wordsworth, Raffaelle's child certainly *was*

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“drawing Clouds of Glory” from *His* Home, and we may suppose him conscious of it—yes, and of his Mission to dispense that glory to the World. And I remember how the same Poet also noticed the Attitude of the Child, which might otherwise seem somewhat too magisterial for his age.’

Euphranor knew the Picture by Engraving only ; but he observed how the Divine Mother’s eyes also were dilated, not as with Human Mother’s Love, but as with awe and Wonder at the Infant she was presenting to the World, as if silently saying, ‘Behold your King !’

‘Why,’ said I, ‘do not some of you believe the “Clouds of Glory” to have been drawn directly from herself?’

‘Nonsense, nonsense, Doctor—you know better, as did Raffaele also, I believe, in spite of the Pope.’

‘Well, well,’ said I, ‘your Wordsworth Boy has also his Divine Mission to fulfil in confessing that of Raffaele’s. But, however it may be with that Mother and Child, does not one—of your Germans, I think—say that, with us mortals, it is from the Mother’s eyes that Religion dawns into the Child’s Soul?—the Religion of Love, at first, I suppose, in gratitude for the flowing breast and feeding hand below.’

‘Perhaps—in some degree,’ said Euphranor. ‘As you were saying of that Sun-worshipper, one cannot fathom how far the Child may see into

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the Mother's eyes any more than all that is to be read in them.'

'To be developed between them thereafter, I suppose,' said I, 'when the Mother's lips interpret the Revelation of her Eyes, and lead up from her Love to the perception of some Invisible Parent of all.'

'Ah,' said Euphranor, 'how well I remember learning to repeat after her, every morning and night, "Our Father which art in Heaven."'

'In your little white Surplice, like Sir Joshua's little Samuel—on whom the Light is dawning direct from Heaven, I think—from Him to whom you were half-articulately praying to "make me a dood Boy" to them. And, by-and-by, Watts and Jane Taylor's, of the Star Daisy in the grass, and the Stars in Heaven,

"For ever singing as they shine,
The Hand that made us is Divine."

'Ah,' said Euphranor, 'and beautiful some of those early things of Watts and Jane Taylor are. They run in my head still.'

'As why should they not?' said I, 'you being yet in your Childhood, you know. Why, I, who have left it some way behind me, to be sure, am constantly reminded of them in the nurseries I am so often call'd into from which they are not yet banish'd by more æsthetic verse. As also, I must say, of some yet more early, and profane, such as "Rock-a-bye Baby on the Tree-

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top,” with that catastrophe which never fail’d to “bring the House down” along with the Bough which is,—Mother’s Arms. Then there was “Little Bopeep” whose stray flock came back to her of themselves, carrying their tails behind them—and “Little Boy Blue” who was less fortunate. Ah, what a pretty little picture he makes “under the haycock”—like one of your Greek Idylls, I think, and quite “suitable to this present Month of May,” as old Izaak says. Let me hear if you remember it, Sir.’

And Euphranor, like a good boy, repeated the verses.¹

‘And then,’ said I, ‘the echoes of those old London Bells whose Ancestors once recall’d Whittington back to be their Lord Mayor ; and now communicating from their several Steeples as to how the account with St. Clement’s was to be paid—which, by-the-by, I remember being thus summarily settled by an old College Friend of mine—

““Confound you all !’
Said the Great bell of Paul ;”

only, I am afraid, with something more Athanasian than ‘Confound’—though he was not then a

¹ ‘Little Boy Blue come blow your horn ;
The Cow’s in the meadow, the Sheep in the corn.
Is this the way you mind your Sheep,
Under the haycock fast asleep ?’

‘The “*meadow*”’ said I, by way of annotation, ‘being, you know, of grass reserved for meadowing, or mowing.’

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Dignitary of the Church. Then that Tragedy of "Cock Robin"—the Fly that saw it with that little Eye of his—and the Owl with his spade and "*Showl*"—proper old word that too—and the Bull who the Bell could pull—and—but I doubt whether you will approve of the Rook reading the Burial Service, nor do I like bringing the Lark, only for a rhyme's sake, down from Heaven, to make the responses. And all this illustrated by appropriate—"Gays," as they call them in Suffolk—and recited, if not intoned, according to the different Characters.'

'Plato's "Music of Education," I suppose,' said Euphranor.

'Yes,' said I, warming with my subject ; 'and then, beside the True Histories of Dog and Horse whose example is to be followed, Fables that treat of others, Lions, Eagles, Asses, Foxes, Cocks, and other feather'd or four-footed Creatures, who, as in Cock Robin's case, talk as well as act, but with a Moral—more or less commendable—provided *the* Moral be dropt. Then as your punning friend Plato, you told me, says that *Thaumas*—Wonder—is Father of Iris, who directly communicates between Heaven and Earth—as in the case of that Bed-post-kissing Apollo—you, being a pious man, doubtless had your Giants, Genii, Enchanters, Fairies, Ogres, Witches, Ghosts——'

But Euphranor was decidedly against admitting any Ghost into the Nursery, and even Witches,

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remembering little Lamb's childish terror at Her of Endor.

'Oh, but,' said I, '*She* was a real Witch, you know, though represented by Stackhouse ; who need not figure among the Musicians, to be sure. You, however, as Lycion says, have your Giants and Dragons to play with—by way of Symbol, if you please—and you must not grudge your younger Brethren in Arms that redoubtable JACK who slew the Giants whom you are to slay over again, and who for that very purpose climb'd up a Bean-stalk some way at least to Heaven—an Allegory that, as Sir Thomas Browne says, "admits of a wide solution."' '

'Ah,' said my companion, 'I remember how you used to climb up the Poplar in our garden by way of Bean-stalk, looking out upon us now and then, till lost among the branches. You could not do that now, Doctor.'

'No more than I could up Jack's own Bean-stalk. I was a thin slip of a Knight then, not long turned of Twenty, I suppose—almost more like a Giant than a Jack to the rest of you—but Children do not mind such disproportions. No—I could better play one of the three Bears growling for his mess of porridge now. But, in default of my transcendental illustration of Jack, he and his like are well represented in such Effigies as your friend Plato never dream'd of in his philosophy, though Phidias and Praxiteles may have sketcht for their Children what

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now is multiplied by engraving into every Nursery.'

'Not to mention Printing, to read about what is represented,' said Euphranor.

'I do not know what to say about *that*,' said I. 'Does not your Philosopher repudiate any but Oral instruction?'

'Notwithstanding all which, I am afraid we must learn to read,' said Euphranor, 'in these degenerate days.'

'Well, if needs must,' said I, 'you may learn in the most musical way of all. Do you not remember the practice of our Forefathers?'

'To Master John, the Chamber-maid
A Horn-book gives of Ginger-bread ;
And, that the Child may learn the better,
As he can name, he eats the Letter.'

'Oh, how I used to wish,' said Euphranor, 'there had been any such royal road to Grammar which one had to stumble over some years after.'

'Well,' said I, 'but there is now, I believe, a Comic Grammar—as well as a Comic History of Rome—and of England.'

'Say no more of all that, pray, Doctor. The old "*Propria quæ maribus*" was better Music, uncouth as it was, and almost as puzzling as an Oracle. I am sure it is only now—when I try—that I understand the meaning of the rule I then repeated mechanically—like a Parrot, you would say.'

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‘Sufficiently intelligible, however,’ said I, ‘to be mechanically applied in distinguishing the different parts of Speech, and how related to one another ; how a verb governs an accusative, and an adjective agrees with a noun ; to all which you are guided by certain terminations of *us*, *a*, *um*, and *do*, *das*, *dat*, and so on ; till you are able to put the scattered words together, and so forth through a sentence. And the old uncouth Music, as you call it, nevertheless served to fix those rules in the memory.’

‘But all that is changed now !’ said Euphranor ; ‘Nominative and Accusative are turned into Subjective and Objective, and what not.’

‘Darkening the unintelligible to Boys,’ said I, ‘whatever it may afterwards to men. “Floreat Etona !” say I, with her old Lily, and “Propria quæ maribus,” always providing there be not too much of it—even could it be construed, like the Alphabet, into Gingerbread.’

‘Well,’ said Euphranor, ‘I think you took pretty good care that we should not suffer an indigestion of the latter, when you were among us at home, Doctor. What with mounting that Bean-stalk yourself, and clearing us out of the Schoolroom into the Garden, wet or dry, regardless of Aunt’s screaming from the window for us to come in, when a Cloud was coming up in the Sky——’

‘Or a little dew lying on the Grass.’

‘Why, I believe you would have a Child’s

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shoes made with holes in them on purpose to let in water, as Locke recommends,' said Euphranor, laughing.

'I wouldn't keep him within for having none, whole shoes, or whole clothes—no, nor *any*—only the Police would interfere.'

'But the Child catches cold.'

'Put him to bed and dose him.'

'But he dies.'

'Then, as a sensible woman said, "is provided for." Your own Plato, I think, says it is better the weakly ones should die at once; and the Spartans, I think, kill'd them off.'

'Come, come, Doctor,' said Euphranor. 'I really think you gave us colds on purpose to be called in to cure them.'

'No, no; that was before I was a Doctor, you know. But I doubt that I was the Lord of Mis-rule sometimes, though, by the way, I am certain that I sometimes recommended a remedy, not when you were sick, but when you were sorry — without a cause—I mean, obstinate, or self-willed against the little Discipline you had to submit to.'

Euphranor looked comically at me.

'Yes,' said I, 'you know—a slap on that part where the Rod is to be applied in after years—and which I had, not long before, suffered myself.'

'*That* is almost out of date now, along with other Spartan severities even in Criminal cases,' said Euphranor.

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‘Yes, and the more the pity in both cases. How much better in the Child’s than being shut up, or additionally tasked—revenging a temporary wrong with a lasting injury. And, as for your public Criminal—my wonder is that even modern squeamishness does not see that a public application of the Rod or Lash on the bare back in the Market-place would be more likely to daunt the Culprit, and all Beholders, from future Misdemeanour than months of imprisonment, well-boarded, lodged, and cared for, at the Country’s cost.’

‘Nevertheless,’ said Euphranor, ‘I do not remember your Advice being taken in our case, much as I, for one, may have deserved it.’

‘No,’ said I; ‘your Father was gone, you know, and your Mother too tender-hearted—indulgent, I might say.’

‘Which, with all your Spartan discipline, I know you think the better extreme,’ said Euphranor.

‘Oh, far the better!’ said I—‘letting the *Truth* come to the surface—the ugliest Truth better than the fairest Falsehood which Fear naturally brings with it, and all the better for determining outwardly, as we Doctors say, than repressed to rankle within. Why, even without fear of spank or Rod, you remember how your Wordsworth’s little Harry was taught the practice of Lying, who, simply being teased with well-meaning questions as to *why* he liked

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one place better than another, caught at a Weather-cock for a reason *why*. Your mother was wiser than that. I dare say she did not bother you about the meaning of the Catechism she taught you, provided you generally understood that you were to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and your tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering. She did not insist, as Skythrope would have had you, on your owning yourselves Children of the Devil.'

'No, no!'

'I should not even wonder if, staunch Church-woman as she was, she did not condemn you to go more than once of a Sunday to Church—perhaps not to be shut up for two hours' morning Service in a Pew, without being allowed to go to sleep there; nor tease you about Text and Sermon afterward. For, if she had, you would not, I believe, have been the determined Churchman you are.'

'Ah, I remember so well,' said Euphranor, 'her telling a stricter neighbour of ours that, for all she saw, the Child generally grew up with clean opposite inclinations and ways of thinking, from the Parent.'

'Yes,' said I, 'that is the way from Parent to Child, and from Generation to Generation; and so the World goes round.'

'And we—Brothers and Sister, I mean'—said Euphranor, 'now catch ourselves constantly saying how right she was in the few things we

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ever thought her mistaken about. God bless her !’

He took a long pull at his glass, and was silent some little while—she had died a few years ago—and then he said :

‘ However, even she began in time to find “the Boys too much for her,” as she said—for which you, Doctor, as you say, are partly accountable ; besides, we should have our livelihood to earn, unlike your born Heroes ; and must begin to work sooner rather than later. Our Friend Skythrops’ *ipse* had already warned her of our innate, and steadily growing, Depravity, and, when I was seven or eight years old, came to propose taking me under his wing, at what he called his “Seminary for young Gentlemen.”’

‘ I see him,’ said I, ‘ coming up the shrubby walk in a white tie, and with a face of determined asperity—the edge of the Axe now turned *toward* the Criminal. Ay, I was gone away to Edinburgh by that time ; indeed I think he waited till I was well out of the way. Well, what did he say ?’

‘ Oh, he explained his scheme, whatever it was——’

‘ And—oh, I can tell you—some eight or ten hours a day of Grammar and Arithmetic, Globes, History, and as Dickens says, “General Christianity” ; and, by way of Recreation, two hours’ daily walk with himself and his sallow Pupils, two and two along the High-road, improved

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with a running commentary by Skythrope—with perhaps a little gymnastic gallows in his gravel Play-ground, without room or time for any generous exercise. Your Mother, I hope, gave him a biscuit and a glass of Sherry, and, with all due thanks, let him go back the way he came.’

‘His plan does not please you, Doctor?’

‘And if it did—and it only wanted reversing—he would not. No Boy with any Blood in his veins can profit from a Teacher trying to graft from dead wood upon the living sapling. Even the poor Women’s “*Preparatory Establishments*” for “Young Gentlemen” are better; however narrow their notions and routine, they do not at heart dislike a little of the Devil in the other sex, however intolerant of him in their own.’

‘Well, we were committed to neither,’ said Euphranor, ‘but to a nice young Fellow who came to be Curate in the Parish, and who taught us at home, little but well—among other things—a little Cricket.’

‘Bravo!’ said I.

‘Then Uncle James, you know, hearing that I was rather of a studious turn—“serious,” he called it—took it into his head that one of his Brother’s family should be a Parson, and so undertook to pay my way at Westminster, which he thought an aristocratic School, and handy for him in the City. In which, perhaps, you do not disagree with him, Doctor?’

‘No,’ said I; ‘though not bred up at any of

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them myself, I must confess I love the great ancient, Royal, ay, and aristocratic Foundations—Eton with her “Henry’s holy Shade”—why, Gray’s verses were enough to endear it to me—and under the walls of his Royal Castle, all reflected in the water of old Father Thames, as he glides down the valley; and Winchester with her William of Wykeham entomb’d in the Cathedral he built beside his School—’

‘And *Westminster*, if you please, Doctor, under the Shadow of its glorious old Abbey, where Kings are crown’d and buried, and with Eton’s own River flowing beside it in ampler proportions.’

‘Though not so sweet,’ said I. ‘However, excepting that fouler water—and fouler air—and some other less wholesome associations inseparable from such a City, I am quite ready to pray for your *Westminster* among those other “Royal and Religious Foundations” whom the Preacher invites us to pray for at St. Mary’s. But with Eton we began, you know, looking with Charles Lamb and his Friend at the fine Lads there playing; and there I will leave them to enjoy it while they may, “strangers yet to Pain”—and Parliament—to sublime their Beefsteak into Chivalry in that famous Cricket-field of theirs by the side of old Father Thames murmuring of so many Generations of chivalric Ancestors.’

‘We must call down Lycion to return thanks for *that* compliment,’ said Euphranor; ‘he is an

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Eton man, as were his Fathers before him, you know, and, I think, proud, as your Etonians are, of his School, in spite of his affected Indifference.'

'Do you know what sort of a Lad he was while there?' said I.

'Oh, always the Gentleman.'

'Perhaps somewhat too much so for a Boy.'

'No, no, I do not mean that—I mean essentially honourable, truthful, and not deficient in courage, I believe, whenever it was called for; but indolent, and perhaps fonder too of the last new Novel, and the Cigar and Easy-chair, to exert himself in the way you like.'

'Preparing for the Club, Opera, Opera-glass, "*Déjeuner dansant*," etcetera, if not for active service in Parliament. Eton should provide for those indolent Children of hers.'

'Well, she has provided her field, and old Father Thames, as you say, and Boys are supposed to take pretty good care of themselves in making use of them.'

'Not always, however, as we see in Lycion's case, nor of others, who, if they do not "sacrifice the Living Man to the Dead Languages," dissipate him among the Fine Arts, Music, Poetry, Painting, and the like, in the interval. Why, did not those very Greeks of whom you make so much—and, as I believe, your modern Germans—make Gymnastic a necessary part of their education?'

'But you would not have Eton Boys compelled

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to climb and tumble like monkeys over gymnastic poles and gallows as we saw with Skythrope's "Young Gentlemen?"'

'Perhaps not; but what do you say now to some good Military Drill, with March, Counter-march, Encounter, Bivouac "Wacht am Rhein"—Encampment—that is, by Father Thames—and such-like Exercises for which Eton has ample room, and which no less a Man—although a Poet—than John Milton, enjoin'd as the proper preparation for War, and, *I* say, carrying along with them a sense of Order, Self-restraint, and Mutual Dependence, no less necessary in all the relations of Peace?'

'We might all of us have been the better for that, I suppose,' said Euphranor.

'And only think,' said I, 'if—as in some German School—Fellenberg's, I think—there were, beside the Playground, a piece of Arable to *work in*—perhaps at a daily wage of provender according to the work done—what illumination might some young Lycion receive, as to the condition of the Poor, "unquenchable by logic and statistics," says Carlyle, "when he comes, as Duke of Logwood, to legislate in Parliament."'

'Better Log than Brute, however,' answer'd Euphranor. 'You must beware, Doctor, lest with all your Ploughing and other Beef-compelling Accomplishments you do not sink the Man in the Animal, as was much the case with our "Hereditary Rulers" of some hundred years ago.'

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“Μηδὲν ἄγαν,” said I; ‘let us but lay in—when only laid in it can be—such a store of that same well-concocted stuff as shall last us all Life’s journey through, with all its ups and downs. Nothing, say the Hunters, that Blood and Bone won’t get over.’

‘Be there a good Rider to guide him!’ said Euphranor; ‘and *that*, in Man’s case, I take it is—if not yet the Reason we talked of—a Moral such as no Beast that breathes is conscious of. You talk of this Animal virtue, and that—why, for instance, is there not a *moral*, as distinguish’d from an *animal* Courage, to face, not only the sudden danger of the field, but something far-off coming, far foreseen, and far more terrible—Cranmer’s, for instance——’

‘Which,’ said I, ‘had all but failed—all the more honour for triumphing at last! But Hugh Latimer, I think, had wrought along with his Father’s hinds in Leicestershire. Anyhow, there is no harm in having two strings to your Bow, whichever of them be the strongest. The immortal Soul, obliged, as she is, to take the Field of Mortality, would not be the worse for being mounted on a good Animal, though I must not say with the Hunters, till the Rider seems “part of his horse.” As to your Reason—he is apt to *crane* a little too much over the hedge, as they say, till, by too long considering the “*How*,” he comes to question the “*Why*,” and, the longer looking, the less liking, shirks it

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altogether, or by his Indecision brings Horse and Rider into the Ditch. Hamlet lets us into the secret—luckily for us enacting the very moral he descants on—when he reflects on his own imbecility of action :

“Whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the Event,
A thought which, quarter’d, hath but one part Wisdom,
And ever three parts Coward—I do not know
Why yet I live to say, “*This thing’s to do*,”
Sith I have Cause, and Will, and Strength, and Means,
To do’t.”

Not in his case surely “*oblivion*,” with such reminders, supernatural and other, as he had : nor as in our case, with the Ditch before our Eyes : nor want of Courage, which was his Royal inheritance ; but the *Will*, which he reckon’d on as surely as on Strength and Means—was he so sure of *that* ? He had previously told us how “The native hue of Resolution”—how like that glow upon the cheek of healthy Youth !—

“The native hue of Resolution
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of Thought,
And Enterprizes of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of Action.”

He had, he tells his College Friends, forgone his “*Custom of Exercises*”—among others, perhaps, his Cricket, at Wittenberg too soon, and taken to reasoning about “To be, or not to be”

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—otherwise he would surely have bowl'd his wicked uncle down at once.'

'Though not without calling "Play!" I hope,' said Euphranor, laughing.

'At any rate, not while his Adversary's back was turned, and so far prepared, inasmuch as he was engaged in repentant Prayer. And that is the reason Hamlet gives for not then despatching him, lest, being so employ'd, he should escape the future punishment of his crime. An odd motive for the youthful Moral to have *reasoned* itself into.'

'His Father had been cut off unprepared, and perhaps, according to the Moral of those days, could only be avenged by such a plenary Expiation.'

'Perhaps ; or, perhaps —and Shakespeare himself may not have known exactly why— Hamlet only made it an excuse for delaying what he had to do, as delay he does, till vengeance seems beyond his reach when he suffers himself to be sent out of the country. For you know the *Habit* of Resolving without Doing, as in the Closet, gradually snaps the connexion between them, and the case becomes chronically hopeless.'

Euphranor said that I had stolen that fine Moral of mine from a Volume of 'Newman's Sermons' which he had lent me, as I agreed with him was probably the case ; and then he said :

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‘Well, Bowling down a King is, I suppose, a ticklish Business, and the Bowler may miss his aim by being too long about taking it: but, in Cricket proper, I have most wonder’d at the Batter who has to decide whether to block, strike, or tip, in that twinkling of an eye between the ball’s delivery, and its arrival at his wicket.’

‘Yes,’ said I, ‘and the Boxer who puts in a blow with one hand at the same moment of warding one off with the other.’

‘“Gladiatorem in arenâ,”’ said Euphranor.

‘Yes; what is called “*Presence of mind*,” where there is no time to “*make it up*.” And all the more necessary and remarkable in proportion to the Danger involved. As when the Hunter’s horse falling with him in full cry, he braces himself, between saddle and ground, to pitch clear of his horse—as Fielding tells us that brave old Parson Adams did, when probably thinking less of his horse than of those Sermons he carried in his saddle-bags.’

‘Ah!’ said Euphranor, ‘Parson Adams was so far a lucky man to have a Horse at all, which we poor fellows now can hardly afford. I remember how I used to envy those who—for the fun, if for nothing else—followed brave old Sedgwick across country, through brier, through mire. Ah! *that* was a Lecture after your own heart, Doctor; something more than peripatetic, and from one with plenty of the Boy in him when over Seventy, I believe.’

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‘ Well, there again,’ said I, ‘ your great Schools might condescend to take another hint from abroad where some one—Fellenberg again, I think—had a Riding-house in his much poorer School, where you might learn not only to sit your horse if ever able to provide one for yourself, but also to saddle, bridle, rub him down, with the *s’s-s’s*’ which I fancy was heard on the morning of Agincourt—if, by the way, one horse was left in all the host.’

‘ Well, come,’ said Euphranor, ‘ the Gladiator, at any rate, is gone—and the Boxer after him—and the Hunter, I think, going after both ; perhaps the very Horse he rides gradually to be put away by Steam into some Museum among the extinct Species that Man has no longer room or business for.’

‘ Nevertheless,’ said I, ‘ War is *not* gone with the Gladiator, and cannon and rifle yet leave room for hand-to-hand conflict, as may one day—which God forbid !—come to proof in our own sea-girt Island. If safe from abroad, some Ruffian may still assault you in some shady lane—nay, in your own parlour—at home, when you have nothing but your own strong arm, and ready soul to direct it. Accidents will happen in the best-regulated families. The House will take fire, the Coach will break down, the Boat will upset ;—is there no gentleman who can swim, to save himself and others ? no one do more to save the Maid snoring in the garret,

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than helplessly looking on—or turning away? Some one is taken ill at midnight; John is drunk in bed; is there no Gentleman can saddle Dobbin—much less get a Collar over his Head, or the Crupper over his tail, without such awkwardness as brings on his abdomen the kick he fears, and spoils him for the journey? And I do maintain,’ I continued, ‘having now gotten “the bit between my teeth”—maintain against all Comers that, independent of any bodily action on their part, these, and the like Accomplishments, as you call them, do carry with them, and, I will say, with the Soul incorporate, that habitual Instinct of Courage, Resolution, and Decision, which, together with the Good Humour which good animal Condition goes so far to ensure, do, I say, prepare and arm the Man not only against the greater, but against those minor Trials of Life which are so far harder to encounter because of perpetually cropping up; and thus do cause him to radiate, if through a narrow circle, yet, through that, imperceptibly to the whole world, a happier atmosphere about him than could be inspired by Closet-loads of Poetry, Metaphysic, and Divinity. No doubt there is danger, as you say, of the Animal overpowering the Rational, as, I maintain, equally so of the reverse; no doubt the high-mettled Colt will be likeliest to run riot, as may my Lad, inflamed with Aristotle’s “Wine of Youth,” into excesses which even the virtuous Berkeley says are the more curable as lying in

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the Passions ; whereas, says he, “ the dry Rogue who sets up for Judgment is incorrigible.” But, whatever be the result, VIGOUR, of Body, as of Spirit, one must have, subject like all good things to the worst corruption—Strength itself, even of Evil, being a kind of *Virtus* which Time, if not good Counsel, is pretty sure to moderate ; whereas Weakness is the one radical and Incurable Evil, increasing with every year of Life.—Which fine Moral, or to that effect, you will also find somewhere in those Sermons, whose Authority I know you cannot doubt.’

‘ And thus,’ said Euphranor, ‘ after this long tirade, you turn out the young Knight from Cricket on the World.’

‘ Nay,’ said I, ‘ did I not tell you from the first I would not meddle with your Digby any more than your Wordsworth ? I have only been talking of ordinary mankind so as to provide for Locke’s “ *totus, teres,* ” and—except in the matter of waistband —“ *rotundus* ” man, sufficiently accoutred for the campaign of ordinary Life. And yet, on second thought, I do not see why he should not do very fairly well for one of the “ Table round,” if King Arthur himself is to be looked for, and found, as the Poet says, in the “ Modern Gentleman,” whose “ stateliest port ” will not be due to the Reading-desk or Easy-chair. At any rate, he will be sufficiently qualified, not only to shoot the Pheasant and hunt the Fox, but even to sit on the Bench of Magistrates

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—or even of Parliament—not unprovided with a quotation or two from Horace or Virgil.’

Euphranor could not deny that, laughing.

‘Or if obliged, poor fellow—Younger son, perhaps—to *do* something to earn him Bread—or Claret—for his Old Age, if not prematurely knocked on the head—whether not well-qualified for Soldier or Sailor?’

‘Nor that.’

‘As for the Church, (which is your other Gentlemanly Profession,) you know your Bishop can consecrate Tom or Blifil equally by that Imposition——’

‘Doctor, Doctor,’ broke in Euphranor, ‘you have been talking very well; don’t spoil it by one of your grimaces.’

‘Well, well,’ said I,—‘Oh, but there is still THE LAW, in which I would rather trust myself with Tom than Blifil,’ added I. ‘Well, what else? Surgery? which is said to need “the Lion’s Heart.”’

‘But also the Lady’s Hand,’ replied he, smiling.

‘Not in drawing one of the Molaes, I assure you. However, thus far I do not seem to have indisposed him for the Professions which his Rank usually opens to him; or perhaps even, if he had what you call a Genius in any direction, might, amid all his Beef-compelling Exercises, light upon something, as Pan a-hunting, and, as it were “unaware,” says Bacon, discover’d that

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Ceres whom the more seriously-searching Gods had looked for in vain.'

'Not for the sake of *Rent*, I hope,' said Euphranor, laughing.

'Or even a turn for looking into Digby and Aristotle, as into a Mirror—could he but distinguish his own face in it.'

Euphranor, upon whose face no sign of any such self-consciousness appeared, sat for a little while silent, and then said :

'Do you remember that fine passage in Aristophanes' *Clouds*—lying libel as it is—between the Δίκαιος and Ἀδίκος Λόγος ?'

'I had forgotten,' I said, 'my little Latin and less Greek : ' and he declared I must however read this scene over again with him. 'It is, you see, Old Athens pleading against Young ; whom after denouncing, for relinquishing the hardy Discipline and simple severe Exercises that reared the Παραθωνομάχους Ἄνδρας, for the Warm Bath, the Dance, and the Law Court ; he suddenly turns to the Young Man who stands hesitating between them, and in those Verses, musical—

Ἄλλ' οὖν λιπαρός γε καὶ εὐανθής—'

'Come, my good fellow,' said I, 'you must interpret.' And Euphranor, looking down, in undertone repeated :

'O listen to me, and so shall you be stout-hearted and fresh as a Daisy :

Not ready to chatter on every matter, nor bent over books till you're hazy :

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No splitter of straws, no dab at the Laws, making black
seem white so cunning :

But scamp'ring down out o' the town, and over the green
Meadow running.

Race, wrestle, and play with your fellows so gay, like so
many Birds of a feather,

All breathing of Youth, Good-humour, and Truth, in the
time of the jolly Spring weather,

In the jolly Spring-time, when the Poplar and Lime
dishevel their tresses together.'

' Well, but go on,' said I, when he stopp'd, ' I
am sure there is something more of it, now you
recall the passage to me—about broad shoulders
and——'

But this was all he had cared to remember.

I then asked him who was the translator ; to
which he replied with a shy smile, 'twas more a
paraphrase than a translation, and I might criticize
it as I liked. To which I had not much to
object, I said—perhaps the trees 'dishevelling
their tresses' a little Cockney ; which he agreed
it was.¹ And then, turning off, observed how
the degradation which Aristophanes satirized in
the Athenian youth went on and on, so that,
when Rome came to help Greece against Philip
of Macedon, the Athenians, says Livy, could
contribute little to the common cause but de-
clamation and despatches—'quibus solum valent.'

¹ On a subsequent reference to the original, we expanded the
last line into the following Couplet—whether for better or worse :

Until with a cool reed drawn from the pool of a neighbouring
Water-nymph crown'd, you

Lie stretcht at your ease in the shade of the trees that whisper
above and around you.

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‘Ay,’ said I, ‘and to think that when Livy was so writing of Athens, his own Rome was just beginning to go downhill in the same way and for the same causes : when, says Horace, the Boy of gentle blood, adept enough at feats of trivial dexterity, had no seat on the Horse, nor courage to follow the Hounds : unlike those early times, when Heroic Father begot and bred Heroic Son ; Generation following Generation, crown’d with Laurel and with Oak ; under a system of Education, the same Livy says, handed down, as it were an Art, from the very foundation of Rome, and filling her Parliament with Generals, each equal, he rhetorically declares, to Alexander.—But come, my dear fellow,’ said I, jumping up, ‘here have I been holding forth like a little Socrates, while the day is passing over our heads. We have forgotten poor Lexilogus, who (I should not wonder) may have stolen away, like your fox, to Cambridge.’

Euphranor, who seemed to linger yet awhile, nevertheless follow’d my example. On looking at my watch I saw we could not take anything like the walk we had proposed and yet be at home by their College dinner¹ ; so as it was I who had wasted the day, I would stand the expense, I said, of dinner at the Inn : after which we could all return at our ease to Cambridge in the Evening. As we were leaving the Bowling-Green, I called up to Lycion, who

¹ Then at 3.30 p.m.

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thereupon appeared at the Billiard-room window with his coat off, and asked him if he had nearly finish'd his Game. By way of answer, he asked us if we had done with our Ogres and Giants ; whom, on the contrary, I said, we were now running away from that we might live to fight another day—would he come with us into the fields for a walk ? or, if he meant to go on with his Billiards, would he dine with us on our return ? ‘Not walk with us,’ he said ; and when I spoke of dinner again, seemed rather to hesitate ; but at last said, ‘Very well ;’ and, nodding to us, retired with his cue into the room.

Then Euphranor and I, leaving the necessary orders within, return'd a little way to look for Lexilogus, whom we soon saw, like a man of honour as he was, coming on his way to meet us. In less than a minute we had met ; and he apologized for having been delay'd by one of Aunt Martha's asthma-fits, during which he had not liked to leave her.

After a brief condolence, we all three turn'd back ; and I told him how, after all, Euphranor and I had play'd no Billiards, but had been arguing all the time about Digby and his books.

Lexilogus smiled, but made no remark, being naturally little given to Speech. But the day was delightful, and we walk'd briskly along the road, conversing on many topics, till a little further on we got into the fields. These—for it

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had been a warm May—were now almost in their Prime, (and that of the Year, Crabbe used to say, fell with the mowing,) crop-thick with Daisy, Clover, and Buttercup ; and, as we went along, Euphranor, whose thoughts still ran on what we had been talking about, quoted from Chaucer whom we had lately been looking at together :

“Embrouded was he as it were a Mede,
Alle ful of fresshe Floures, white and rede,”

and added, ‘What a picture was that, by the way, of a young Knight !’

I had half-forgotten the passage, and Lexilogus had never read Chaucer : so I begg’d Euphranor to repeat it ; which he did, with an occasional pause in his Memory, and jog from mine.

“With him ther was his Sone, a yonge Squier,
A Lover, and a lusty Bachelor,
With Lockes crull, as they were laide in presse ;
Of Twenty yere of age he was, I gesse ;
Of his Stature he was of even lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and grete of Strengthe ;
And he hadde be sometime in Chevachie,
In Flaundres, in Artois, and in Picardie,
And borne him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his Ladies grace.
Embrouded was he as it were a Mede,
Alle ful of fresshe Floures, white and rede ;
Singing he was, or floyting alle the day ;
He was as fresshe as is the moneth of May :
Short was his Goune, with sleves long and wide,
Wel coude he sitte on Hors, and fayre ride ;
He coude Songes make, and well endite,
Juste, and eke dance, and wel pourtraie and write.

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So hote he loved, that by nightertale
He slep no more than doth the Nightingale.
Curteis he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf before his Fader at the table."

‘Chaucer, however,’ said Euphranor, when he had finished the passage, ‘credited his young Squire with other Accomplishments than you would trust him with, Doctor. See, he dances, draws, and even indites songs—somewhat of a Dilettante, after all.’

‘But also,’ I added, ‘is of “grete Strengthe,” “coude fayre ride,” having already “borne him wel in Chevachie.” Besides,’ continued I, (who had not yet subsided, I suppose, from the long swell of my former sententiousness,) ‘in those days, you know, there was scarce any Reading, which now, for better or worse, occupies so much of our time; Men left that to Clerk and Schoolman; contented, as we before agreed, to follow their bidding to Pilgrimage and Holy war. Some of those gentler Accomplishments may then have been needed to soften manners, just as rougher ones to strengthen ours. And, long after that, Sir Philip Sidney might well indulge in a little Sonneteering, amid all those public services which ended at Zutfen; as later on, in the Stuart days, Lord Dorset troll off—“*To all you Ladies now on Land,*” from the Fleet that was just going into Action off the coast of Holland.’

‘Even Master Samuel Pepys,’ said Euphranor,

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laughing, 'might sit with a good grace down to practise his "*Beauty retire*," after riding to Huntingdon and back, as might Parson Adams have done many years after.'

'They were both prefigured among those Canterbury Pilgrims so many years before,' said I. 'Only think of it! Some nine-and-twenty, I think, "by aventure yfalle in feleweship," High and Low, Rich and Poor, Saint and Sinner, Cleric and Lay, Knight, Ploughman, Prioress, Wife of Bath, Shipman, hunting Abbot-like Monk, Poor Parson—(Adams' Progenitor)—Webster (Pepys')—on rough-riding "Stot" or ambling Palfrey, marshall'd by mine Host of the Tabard to the music of the Miller's Bag-pipes, on their sacred errand to St. Thomas'; and one among them taking note of all in Verse still fresh as the air of those Kentish hills they travelled over on that April morning four hundred years ago.'

'Lydgate too, I remember,' said Euphranor, 'tells of Chaucer's good-humour'd encouragement of his Brother-poets—I cannot now recollect the lines,' he added, after pausing a little.¹

¹ The verses Euphranor could not remember are these :

'For Chaucer that my Master was, and knew
What did belong to writing Verse and Prose,
Ne'er stumbled at small faults, nor yet did view
With scornful eyes the works and books of those
That in his time did write, nor yet would taunt
At any man, to fear him or to daunt.'

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‘A famous Man of Business too,’ said I, ‘employ’d by Princes at home and abroad. And ready to fight as to write; having, he says, when some City people had accused him of Un-truth, “prepared his body for Mars his doing, if any contraried his saws.”’

‘A Poet after your own heart, Doctor, sound in wind and limb, Mind and Body. In general, however, they are said to be a sickly, irritable, inactive, and solitary race.’

‘Not our “Canterbury Pilgrim” for one,’ said I; ‘no, nor his successor, William Shakespeare, who, after a somewhat roving Knighthood in the country, became a Player, Play-wright, and Play-manager in London, where, after managing (as not all managers do) to make a sufficient fortune, he returned home again to settle in his native Stratford—whither by the way he had made occasional Pilgrimages before—on horseback, of course—putting up—for the night—at the Angel of Oxford—about which some stories are told——’

‘As fabulous as probably those of his poaching in earlier days,’ said Euphranor.

‘Well, however that may be—and I constantly believe in the poaching part of the Story—to Stratford he finally retired, where he built a house, and planted Mulberries, and kept company with John-a-Combe, and the neighbouring Knights and Squires—except perhaps the Lucys—as merrily as with the Wits of London; all

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the while supplying his own little "Globe"—and, from it, "the Great globe itself," with certain manuscripts, in which (say his Fellow-players and first Editors) Head and hand went so easily together as scarce to leave a blot on the pages they travell'd over.'

'Somewhat resembling Sir Walter Scott's, I think,' said Euphranor, 'in that love for Country home, and Country neighbour—ay, and somewhat also in that easy intercourse between Head and hand in composition which those who knew them tell of—however unequal in the result. Do you remember Lockhart's saying how glibly Sir Walter's pen was heard to canter over the paper, before "Atra Cura" saddled herself behind him?'

'Ah, yes,' said I; "'Magician of the North" they call'd him in my own boyish days; and such he is to me now; though maybe not an Archi-magus like him of Stratford, to set me down in Rome, Athens, Egypt, with their Heroes, Heroines, and Commoners, moving and talking as living men and women about me, howsoever "larger than human" through the breadth of Imagination in which he has clothed them.'

'Somebody—your Carlyle, I believe,' said Euphranor, 'lays it down that Sir Walter's Characters are in general fashioned from without to within—the reverse of Shakespeare's way—and Nature's.'

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‘What,’ said I, ‘according to old Sartor’s theory, beginning from the over-coat of temporary Circumstance, through the temporary Tailor’s “Just-au-corps,” till arriving at such centre of Humanity as may lie within the bodily jerkin we talk’d of?’

‘Something of that sort, I suppose,’ said Euphranor; ‘but an you love me, Doctor, no more of that odious old jerkin, whether Sterne’s or Carlyle’s.’

‘Well,’ said I, ‘if the Sartor’s charge hold good, it must lie against the Heroes and Heroines of the later, half-historical, Romances; in which, nevertheless, are scenes where our Elizabeth, and James, and Lewis of France figure, that seem to me as good in Character and Circumstance as any in that Henry the Eighth, which has always till quite lately been accepted for Shakespeare’s. But Sartor’s self will hardly maintain his charge against the Deanses, Dumbiedykes, Ochiltrees, Baillies, and others of the bonâ-fide *Scotch* Novels, with the likes of whom Scott fell “in feleweship” from a Boy, riding about the country—“born to be a trooper,” he said of himself; no, nor with the Bradwardines, Balfours, Maccombicks, Macbriars, and others, Highlander, Lowlander, Royalist, Roundhead, Churchman, or Covenanter, whom he animated with the true Scottish blood which ran in himself as well as in those he lived among, and so peopled those Stories which are become Household History to us. I declare

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that I scarce know whether Macbeth's blasted heath would move me more than did the first sight of the Lammermoor Hills when I rounded the Scottish coast on first going to Edinburgh ; or of that ancient " Heart of Mid-Lothian " when I got there. But the domestic Tragedy naturally comes more nearly home to the bosom of your Philistine.'

' Sir Walter's stately neighbour across the Tweed,' said Euphranor, ' took no great account of his Novels, and none at all of his Verse—though, by the way, he did call him " Great Minstrel of the Border " after revisiting Yarrow in his company ; perhaps he meant it only of the Minstrelsy which Scott collected, you know.'

' Wordsworth ? ' said I—' a man of the Milton rather than of the Chaucer and Shakespeare type—without humour, like the rest of his Brethren of the Lake.'

' Not but he loves Chaucer as much as you can, Doctor, for those fresh touches of Nature, and tenderness of Heart—insomuch that he has re-cast the Jew of Lincoln's Story into a form more available for modern readers.'

' And successfully ? '

' Ask Lexilogus—Ah ! I forget that he never read Chaucer ; but I know that he loves Wordsworth next to his own Cowper.'

Lexilogus believed that he liked the Poem in question, but he was not so familiar with it as with many other of Wordsworth's pieces.

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‘Ah, you and I, Euphranor,’ said I, ‘must one day teach Lexilogus the original before he is become too great a Don to heed such matters.’

Lexilogus smiled, and Euphranor said that before that time came Lexilogus and he would teach me in return to love Wordsworth more than I did—or pretended to do. Not only the Poet, but the Man, he said, who loved his Home as well as Shakespeare and Scott loved theirs—ay, and his Country Neighbours too, though perhaps in a sedater way ; and, as so many of his Poems show, as sensible as Sir Walter of the sterling virtues of the Mountaineers and Dalesmen he lived among, though, maybe, not of their humour.

‘Was he not also pretty exact in his office of stamp-distributor among them ?’ asked I.

‘Come, you must not quarrel, Doctor, with the Business which, as with Chaucer and Shakespeare, may have kept the Poetic Element in due proportion with the rest—including, by the way, such a store of your Animal, laid in from constant climbing the mountain, and skating on the lake, that he may still be seen, I am told, at near upon Eighty, travelling with the shadow of the cloud up Helvellyn.’

‘Bravo, Old Man of the Mountains !’ said I. ‘But, nevertheless, it would not have been amiss with him had he been sent earlier, and further, from his mountain-mother’s lap, and had some of his—conceit, I must not call it—Pride, then

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—taken out of him by a freer intercourse with men.’

‘I suppose,’ said Euphranor, again laughing, ‘you would knock a young Apollo about like the rest of us common pottery?’

‘I think I *should* send young Wordsworth to that Military Drill of ours, and see if some rough-riding would not draw some of that dangerous Sensibility which “young Edwin” is apt to mistake for poetical Genius.’

‘Gray had more than that in him, I know,’ said Euphranor; ‘but I doubt what might have become of his poetry had such been the discipline of his Eton day.’

‘Perhaps something better—perhaps nothing at all—and *he* the happier man.’

‘But not *you*, Doctor—for the loss of his Elegy—with all your talk.’

‘No; I am always remembering, and always forgetting it: remembering, I mean, the several stanzas, and forgetting how they link together; partly, perhaps, because of each being so severally elaborated. Neither Yeomanry Drill—nor daily Plough—drove the Muse out of Burns.’

‘Nor the Melancholy neither, for that matter,’ said Euphranor. ‘Those “Banks and braes” of his could not bestow on him even the “momentary joy” which those Eton fields “beloved in vain” breathed into the heart of Gray.’

‘Are you not forgetting,’ said I, ‘that Burns was not then singing of himself, but of some

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forsaken damsel, as appears by the second stanza ? which few, by the way, care to remember. As unremember'd it may have been,' I continued, after a pause, 'by the only living—and like to live—Poet I had known, when, so many years after, he found himself beside that "bonnie Doon" and—whether it were from recollection of poor Burns, or of "the days that are no more" which haunt us all, I know not—I think he did not know—but, he somehow "broke" as he told me, "broke into a passion of tears."—Of tears, which during a pretty long and intimate intercourse, I had never seen glisten in his eye but once, when reading Virgil—"dear old Virgil," as he call'd him—together : and then of the burning of Troy in the Second *Æneid*—whether moved by the catastrophe's self, or the majesty of the Verse it is told in—or, as before, scarce knowing why. For, as King Arthur shall bear witness, no young Edwin he, though, as a great Poet, comprehending all the softer stops of human Emotion in that Register where the Intellectual, no less than what is call'd the Poetical, faculty predominated. As all who knew him know, a Man at all points, Euphranor—like your Digby, of grand proportion and feature, significant of that inward Chivalry, becoming his ancient and honourable race ; when himself a "Yongé Squire," like him in Chaucer "of grete strength," that could hurl the crow-bar further than any of the neighbouring clowns,

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whose humours, as well as of their betters,—Knight, Squire, Landlord and Land-tenant,—he took quiet note of, like Chaucer himself. Like your Wordsworth on the Mountain, he too, when a Lad, abroad on the Wold ; sometimes of a night with the Shepherd ; watching not only the Flock on the greensward, but also

““The fleecy Star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas”

along with those other Zodiacal constellations which Aries, I think, leads over the field of Heaven. He then observed also some of those uncertain phenomena of Night : unsurmised apparitions of the Northern Aurora, by some shy glimpses of which no winter—no, nor even summer—night, he said, was utterly unvisited ; and those strange voices, whether of creeping brook, or copses muttering to themselves far off—perhaps the yet more impossible Sea—together with “other sounds we know not whence they come,” says Crabbe, but all inaudible to the ear of Day. He was not then, I suppose, unless the Word spontaneously came upon him, thinking how to turn what he saw and heard into Verse ; a premeditation that is very likely to defeat itself, previously breathing, as it were, upon the mirror which is to receive the Image that most assuredly flashes Reality into word.’¹

¹ The sentence originally stood thus :

‘For is not what we call *Poetry* said to be an inspiration, which,

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Something to this effect I said, though, were it but for lack of walking breath, at no so long-winded a stretch of eloquence. And then Euphranor, whose lungs were in so much better order than mine, though I had left him so little opportunity for using them, took up where I left off, and partly read, and partly told us of a delightful passage from his Godefridus, to this effect, that, if the Poet could not invent, neither could his Reader understand him, when he told of Ulysses and Diomed listening to the crane clanging in the marsh by night, without having *experienced* something of the sort. And so we went on, partly in jest, partly in earnest, drawing Philosophers of all kinds into the same net in which we had entangled the Poet and his Critic—How the Moralist who worked alone in his closet was apt to mismeasure Humanity, and be very angry when the cloth he cut out for him would not fit—how the best Histories were written by those who themselves had been actors in them—Gibbon, one of the next best, I believe, recording how the discipline of the Hampshire Militia he served as Captain in—how odd he must have looked in the uniform!—enlighten'd him as to the evolutions of a Roman Legion—And so on a great deal more; till, suddenly observing how the sun had declined from his

if not kindling at the sudden collision, or recollection, of Reality, will yet less be quicken'd by anticipation, howsoever it may be controll'd by after-thought ?'

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meridian, I look'd at my watch, and ask'd my companions did not they begin to feel hungry, like myself? They agreed with me; and we turn'd homeward: and as Lexilogus had hitherto borne so little part in the conversation, I began to question him about Herodotus and Strabo, (whose books I had seen lying open upon his table,) and drew from him some information about the courses of the Nile and the Danube, and the Geography of the Old World: till, all of a sudden, our conversation skipt from Olympus, I think, to the hills of Yorkshire—our own old hills—and the old friends and neighbours who dwelt among them. And as we were thus talking, we heard what seemed to us the galloping of Horses behind us, (for we were now again upon the road,) and, looking back as they were just coming up, I recognised Phidippus for one of the riders, with two others whom I did not know. I held up my hand, and call'd out to him as he was passing; and Phidippus, drawing up his Horse all snorting and agitated with her arrested course, wheel'd back and came alongside of us.

I ask'd him what he was about, galloping along the road; I thought scientific men were more tender of their horses' legs and feet. But the roads, he said, were quite soft with the late rains; and they were only trying each other's speed for a mile or so.

By this time his two companions had pulled

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up some way forward, and were calling him to come on ; but he said, laughing, ‘ they had quite enough of it,’ and address’d himself with many a ‘ Steady !’ and ‘ So ! So !’ to pacify Miss Middleton, as he called her, who still caper’d, plung’d, and snatch’d at her bridle ; his friends shouting louder and louder—‘ Why the Devil he didn’t come on ?’

He waved his hand to them in return ; and with a ‘ Confound ’ and ‘ Deuce take the Fellow,’ they set off away toward the town. On which Miss Middleton began afresh, plunging, and blowing out a peony nostril after her flying fellows ; until, what with their dwindling in distance, and some expostulation address’d to her by her Master as to a fractious Child, she seem’d to make up her mind to the indignity, and composed herself to go pretty quietly beside us.

I then asked him did he not remember Lexilogus,—(Euphranor he had already recognised,)—and Phidippus who really had not hitherto seen who it was, (Lexilogus looking shyly down all the while,) call’d out heartily to him, and wheeling his mare suddenly behind us, took hold of his hand, and began to inquire about his family in Yorkshire.

‘ One would suppose,’ said I, ‘ you two fellows had not met for years.’

‘ It was true,’ Phidippus said, ‘ they did not meet as often as he wish’d ; but Lexilogus would not come to his rooms, and he did not like to

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disturb Lexilogus at his books ; and so the time went on.'

I then inquired about his own reading, which, though not much, was not utterly neglected, it seemed ; and he said he had meant to ask one of us to beat something into his stupid head this summer in Yorkshire.

Lexilogus, I knew, meant to stop at Cambridge all the long Vacation ; but Euphranor said he should be at home, for anything he then knew, and they could talk the matter over when the time came. We then again fell to talking of our County ; and among other things I asked Phidippus if his horse were Yorkshire,—of old famous for its breed, as well as of Riders,—and how long he had had her, and so forth.

Yorkshire she was, a present from his Father, 'and a great pet,' he said, bending down his head, which Miss Middleton answered by a dip of hers, shaking the bit in her mouth, and breaking into a little canter, which however was easily suppress'd.

'Miss Middleton ?' said I—'what, by Bay Middleton out of Coquette, by Tomboy out of High-Life Below-Stairs, right up to Mahomet and his Mares ?'

'Right,' he answered, laughing, 'as far as Bay Middleton was concerned.'

'But, Phidippus,' said I, 'she's as black as a coal !'

'And so was her Dam, a Yorkshire Mare,' he

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answered ; which, I said, saved the credit of all parties. Might she perhaps be descended from our famous ‘Yorkshire Jenny,’ renowned in Newmarket Verse ! But Phidippus had never heard of ‘Yorkshire Jenny,’ nor of the Ballad, which I promised to acquaint him with, if he would stop on his way back, and dine with us at Chesterton, where his Mare might have her Dinner too—all of us Yorkshiremen except Lycion, whom he knew a little of. There was to be a Boat-race, however, in the evening, which Phidippus said he must leave us to attend, if dine with us he did ; for though not one of the Crew on this occasion, (not being one of the best,) he must yet see his own Trinity keep the head of the River. As to that, I said, we were all bound the same way, which indeed Euphranor had proposed before ; and so the whole affair was settled.

As we went along, I began questioning him concerning some of those Equestrian difficulties which Euphranor and I had been talking of : all which Phidippus thought was only my usual banter—‘he was no Judge—I must ask older hands,’ and so forth—until we reach’d the Inn, when I begg’d Euphranor to order dinner at once, while I and Lexilogus accompanied Phidippus to the Stable. There, after giving his mare in charge to the hostler with due directions as to her toilet and table, he took off her saddle and bridle himself, and adjusted the head-

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stall. Then, follow'd out of the stable by her flaming eye and pointed ears, he too pausing a moment on the threshold to ask me, 'was she not a Beauty?' (for he persisted in the delusion of my knowing more of the matter than I chose to confess), we cross'd over into the house.

There, having wash'd our hands and faces, we went up into the Billiard-room, where we found Euphranor and Lycion playing,—Lycion very lazily, like a man who had already too much of it, but yet nothing better to do. After a short while, the girl came to tell us all was ready; and, after that slight hesitation as to precedence which Englishmen rarely forget on the least ceremonious occasions,—Lexilogus, in particular, pausing timidly at the door, and Euphranor pushing him gently forward,—we got down to the little Parlour, very airy and pleasant, with its windows opening on the bowling-green, the table laid with a clean white cloth, and upon that a dish of smoking beef-steak, at which I, as master of the Feast, and, as Euphranor slyly intimated, otherwise entitled, sat down to officiate. For some time the clatter of knife and fork, and the pouring of ale, went on, mix'd with some conversation among the young men about College matters: till Lycion began to tell us of a gay Ball he had lately been at, and of the Families there; among whom he named three young Ladies from a neighbouring County, by far the handsomest women present, he said.

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‘And very accomplish’d too, I am told,’ said Euphranor.

‘Oh, as for that,’ replied Lycion, ‘they *Valse* very well.’ He hated ‘your accomplished women,’ he said.

‘Well, there,’ said Euphranor, ‘I suppose the Doctor will agree with you.’

I said, that certainly *Valsing* would be no great use to me personally—unless, as some Lady of equal size and greater rank had said, I could meet with a concave partner.

‘One knows so exactly,’ said Lycion, ‘what the Doctor would choose,—a woman

“Well versed in the Arts
Of Pies, Puddings, and Tarts,”

as one used to read of somewhere, I remember.’

‘Not forgetting,’ said I, ‘the being able to help in compounding a pill or a plaister; which I dare say your Great-grandmother knew something about, Lycion, for in those days, you know, Great ladies studied Simples. Well, so I am fitted,—as Lycion is to be with one who can *Valse* through life with him.’

“And follow so the ever-rolling Year
With profitable labour to their graves,”

added Euphranor, laughing.

‘I don’t want to marry her,’ said Lycion testily.

‘Then Euphranor,’ said I, ‘will advertise for

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a "Strong-minded" Female, able to read Plato with him, and Wordsworth, and Digby, and become a Mother of Heroes. As to Phidippus there is no doubt—Diana Vernon——'

But Phidippus disclaimed any taste for Sporting ladies.

'Well, come,' said I, passing round a bottle of sherry I had just call'd for, 'every man to his liking, only all of you taking care to secure the accomplishments of Health and Good-humour.'

'Ah! there it is, out at last!' cried Euphranor, clapping his hands; 'I knew the Doctor would choose for us as Frederick for his Grenadiers.'

'So you may accommodate me,' said I, 'with a motto from another old Song whenever my time comes ;

"Give Isaac the Nymph who no beauty can boast,
But Health and Good-humour to make her his toast."

Well, every man to his fancy—Here's to mine! —And when we have finish'd the bottle, which seems about equal to one more errand round the table, we will adjourn, if you like, to the Bowling-green, which Euphranor will tell us was the goodly custom of our Forefathers, and I can recommend as a very wholesome after-dinner exercise.'

'Not, however, till we have the Doctor's famous Ballad about Miss Middleton's possible Great-Great-Grandmother,' cried Euphranor, 'by way of Pindaric close to this Heroic entertainment,

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sung from the Chair, who probably composed it——’

‘As little as could sing it,’ I assured him.

‘Oh, I remember, it was the Jockey who rode her!’

‘Perhaps only his Helper,’ answered I; ‘such bad grammar, and rhyme, and altogether want of what your man—how do you call him—G. O. E. T. H. E.—“*Gewty*,” will that do?—calls, I believe, *Art*.’

‘Who nevertheless once declares,’ said Euphranor, ‘that the Ballad was scarcely possible but to those who simply saw with their Eyes, heard with their Ears—and, I really think he said, fought with their fists,—I suppose also felt with their hearts—without any notion of “*Art*”—although Goethe himself, Schiller, and Rückert, and other of your æsthetic Germans, Doctor, have latterly done best in that line, I believe.’

‘Better than Cowper’s “Royal George,”’ said I, ‘where every word of the narrative *tells*, as from a Seaman’s lips?’

‘*That* is something before our time, Doctor.’

‘Better then than some of Campbell’s which follow’d it? or some of Sir Walter’s? or “The Lord of Burleigh,” which is later than all? But enough that my poor Jock may chance to sing of his Mare as well as Shenstone of his Strephon and Delia.’

‘Or more modern Bards of Cocles in the Tiber, or Regulus in the Tub,’ said Euphranor.

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—‘ But come ! Song from the Chair ! ’ he call’d out, tapping his glass on the table, which Phidippus echoed with his.

So with a prelude ‘ Well then, ’ I began—

“ I’ll sing you a Song, and a merry, merry Song ”—

By the way, Phidippus, what an odd notion of merriment is a Jockey’s, if this Song be a sample. I think I have observed they have grave, taciturn faces, especially when old, which they soon get to look. Is this from much wasting, to carry little Flesh—and large—Responsibility ? ’

‘ Doctor, Doctor, leave your—faces, and begin ! ’ interrupted Euphranor. ‘ I must call the Chair to Order.’

Thus admonish’d, with some slight interpolations, (to be jump’d by the *Æsthetic*,) I repeated the poor Ballad which, dropp’d I know not how nor when into my ear, had managed, as others we had talk’d of, to chink itself in some corner of a memory that should have been occupied with other professional jargon than a ‘ Jockey’s.’

I.

‘ I’ll sing you a Song, and a merry, merry Song,
Concerning our Yorkshire Jen ;
Who never yet ran with Horse or Mare,
That ever she cared for a pin.

II.

When first she came to Newmarket town,
The Sportsmen all view’d her around ;

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All the cry was, "Alas, poor wench,
Thou never can run this ground!"

III.

When they came to the starting-post,
The Mare look'd very smart;
And let them all say what they will,
She never lost her start—

—which I don't quite understand, by the way :
do you, Lycion ?'—No answer.

IV.

'When they got to the Two-mile post,
Poor Jenny was cast behind :
She was cast behind, she was cast behind,
All for to take her wind.

V.

When they got to the Three-mile post,
The mare look'd very pale—

(Phidippus !'—His knee moved under the
table—)

'SHE LAID DOWN HER EARS ON HER BONNY NECK,
AND BY THEM ALL DID SHE SAIL ;

VI. (*Accelerando.*)

"Come follow me, come follow me,
All you who run so neat ;
And ere that you catch me again,
I'll make you well to sweat."

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VII. (*Grandiosa.*)

When she got to the Winning-post,
The people all gave a shout :
And Jenny click'd up her Lily-white foot,
And jump'd like any Buck.

VIII.

The Jockey said to her, ' This race you have run,
This race for me you have got ;
You could gallop it all over again,
When the rest could hardly trot ! '

' They were Four-mile Heats in those days, you see, would pose your modern Middletons, though Miss Jenny, laying back her ears—away from catching the Wind, some think—and otherwise "*pale*," with the distended vein and starting sinew of that Three-mile crisis, nevertheless on coming triumphantly in, click'd up that lily-white foot of hers, (of which *one*, I have heard say, is as good a sign, as all four white are a bad,) and could, as the Jockey thought, have gallop'd it all over again—Can't you see him, Phidippus, for once forgetful of his professional stoicism, (but I don't think Jockeys were quite so politic then,) bending forward to pat the bonny Neck that measured the Victory, as he rides her slowly back to the—*Weighing-house*, is it—? follow'd by the scarlet-coated Horsemen and shouting People of those days ?—all silent, and pass'd away for ever now, unless from the memory of one pursy Doctor, who, were she but alive, would hardly

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know Jenny's head from her tail—And now will you have any more wine?' said I, holding up the empty decanter.

Phidippus, hastily finishing his glass, jump'd up; and, the others following him with more or less alacrity, we all sallied forth on the Bowling-green. As soon as there, Lycion of course pull'd out his Cigar-case, (which he had eyed, I saw, with really good-humoured resignation during the Ballad,) and offer'd it all round, telling Phidippus he could recommend the contents as some of Pontet's best. But Phidippus did not smoke, he said; which, together with his declining to bet on the Boat-race, caused Lycion, I thought, to look on him with some indulgence.

And now Jack was rolled upon the green; and I bowl'd after him first, pretty well; then Euphranor still better; then Lycion, with great indifference, and indifferent success; then Phidippus, who about rivall'd me; and last of all, Lexilogus, whom Phidippus had been instructing in the mystery of the bias with some little side-rolls along the turf, and who, he said, only wanted a little practice to play as well as the best of us.

Meanwhile, the shadows lengthen'd along the grass, and after several bouts of play, Phidippus, who had to ride round by Cambridge, said he must be off in time to see his friends start. We should soon follow, I said; and Euphranor asked him to his rooms after the race. But Phidippus was engaged to sup with his crew.

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‘Where you will all be drunk,’ said I.

‘No ; there,’ said he, ‘you are quite mistaken, Doctor.’

‘Well, well,’ I said, ‘away, then, to your race and your supper.’

‘Μετὰ σῶφρονος ἡλικιώτου,’ added Euphranor, smiling.

‘Μετὰ, “with,” or “after,”’ said Phidippus, putting on his gloves.

‘Well, go on, Sir,’ said I,—‘Σῶφρονος?’

‘A temperate—something or other—’

‘Ἡλικιώτου?’

‘Supper?’—he hesitated, smiling—‘“After a temperate supper?”’

‘Go down, Sir ; go down this instant!’ I roar’d out to him as he ran from the bowling-green. And in a few minutes we heard his mare’s feet shuffling over the stable threshold, and directly afterwards breaking into a retreating canter beyond.

Shortly after this, the rest of us agreed it was time to be gone. We walk’d along the fields by the Church, (purposely to ask about the sick Lady by the way,) cross’d the Ferry, and mingled with the crowd upon the opposite shore ; Towns-men and Gownsmen, with the tassell’d Fellow-commoner sprinkled here and there—Reading men and Sporting men—Fellows, and even Masters of Colleges, not indifferent to the prowess of their respective Crews—all these, conversing on all sorts of topics, from the slang in *Bell’s*

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Life to the last new German Revelation, and moving in ever-changing groups down the shore of the river, at whose farther bend was a little knot of Ladies gathered up on a green knoll faced and illuminated by the beams of the setting sun. Beyond which point was at length heard some indistinct shouting, which gradually increased, until 'They are off—they are coming!' suspended other conversation among ourselves; and suddenly the head of the first boat turn'd the corner; and then another close upon it; and then a third; the crews pulling with all their might compacted into perfect rhythm; and the crowd on shore turning round to follow along with them, waving hats and caps, and cheering, 'Bravo, St. John's!' 'Go it, Trinity!'—the high crest and blowing forelock of Phidippus's mare, and he himself shouting encouragement to his crew, conspicuous over all—until, the boats reaching us, we also were caught up in the returning tide of spectators, and hurried back toward the goal; where we arrived just in time to see the Ensign of Trinity lowered from its pride of place, and the Eagle of St. John's soaring there instead. Then, waiting a little while to hear how the winner had won, and the loser lost, and watching Phidippus engaged in eager conversation with his defeated brethren, I took Euphranor and Lexilogus under either arm, (Lycion having got into better company elsewhere,) and walk'd home with them across the

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meadow leading to the town, whither the dusky troops of Gownsmen with all their confused voices seem'd as it were evaporating in the twilight, while a Nightingale began to be heard among the flowering Chestnuts of Jesus.

AGAMEMNON

A TRAGEDY

TAKEN FROM

ÆSCHYLUS

This Version—or Per-version—of *Æschylus* was originally printed to be given away among Friends, who either knew nothing of the Original, or would be disposed to excuse the liberties taken with it by an unworthy hand.

PREFACE

ALL the Choruses in this Tragedy call for a more lyrical Interpreter than myself. But even I might have done better with the first, by mingling fragments of the so oft-told Story with such dark and ill-ominous presage as would accumulate as Time went on.

So much for the matter. As for the manner ; I think that some such form as Tennyson has originated in his version of the battle of Brunanburh might well be adopted in this case, as in many other of Æschylus' Choruses—such as in the Persæ, the Seven against Thebes, and the Eumenides—the question being whether such a trochaic gallop may not over-ride the Iambic Blank Verse Dialogue that follows it.

I suppose that a literal version of this play, if possible, would scarce be intelligible. Even were the dialogue always clear, the lyric Choruses, which make up so large a part, are so dark and abrupt in themselves, and therefore so much the more mangled and tormented by copyist and commentator, that the most conscientious

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translator must not only jump at a meaning, but must bridge over a chasm ; especially if he determine to complete the antiphony of Strophe and Antistrophe in English verse.

Thus, encumbered with forms which sometimes, I think, hang heavy on Æschylus himself¹ : struggling with indistinct meanings, obscure allusions, and even with *puns* which some have tried to reproduce in English ; this grand play, which to the scholar and the poet, lives, breathes, and moves in the dead language, has hitherto seemed to me to drag and stifle under conscientious translation into the living ; that is to say, to have lost that which I think the drama can least afford to lose all the world over. And so it was that, hopeless of succeeding where as good versifiers, and better scholars, seemed to me to have failed, I came first to break the bounds of Greek Tragedy ; then to swerve from the Master's footsteps ; and so, one license drawing on another to make all of a piece, arrived at the present anomalous conclusion. If it has succeeded in shaping itself into a distinct, consistent, and animated Whole, through which the reader can follow without halting, and not without accelerating interest from beginning to end, he will perhaps excuse my acknowledged transgressions, and will not disdain the Jade that

¹ For instance, the long antiphonal dialogue of the Chorus debating what to do—or whether do anything—after hearing their master twice cry out (in pure Iambics also) that he is murdered.

PREFACE

has carried him so far so well till he find himself mounted on a Thorough-bred whose thunder-clothed neck and long-resounding pace shall better keep up with the Original.

For to re-create the Tragedy, body and soul, into English, and make the Poet free of the language which reigns over that half of the world never dreamt of in his philosophy, must be reserved—especially the Lyric part—for some Poet, worthy of that name, and of congenial Genius with the Greek. Would that every one such would devote himself to one such work ! whether by Translation, Paraphrase, or Metaphrase, to use Dryden's definition, whose Alexander's Feast, and some fragments of whose Plays, indicate that he, perhaps, might have rendered such a service to Æschylus and to us. Or, to go further back in our own Drama, one thinks what Marlowe might have done ; himself a translator from the Greek ; something akin to Æschylus in his genius ; still more in his grandiose, and sometimes *authadostomous* verse ; of which some lines relating to this very play fall so little short of Greek, that I shall but shame my own by quoting them beforehand ;

‘Is this the face that launch’d a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium ?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss !’

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AGAMEMNON *King of Argos.*
CLYTEMNESTRA *his Queen.*
ÆGISTHUS *his Cousin.*
CASSANDRA *Daughter of King PRIAM.*
HERALD.

CHORUS OF ANCIENT COUNCILLORS.

The scene is at ARGOS.

AGAMEMNON

[AGAMEMNON'S *Palace : a Warder on the Battlements.*]

WARDER.

[Once more, once more, and once again once more]

I crave the Gods' compassion, and release
From this inexorable watch, that now
For one whole year, close as a couching dog,
On Agamemnon's housetop I have kept,
Contemplating the muster of the stars,
And those transplendent Dynasties of Heav'n¹
That, as alternately they rise and fall,
Draw Warmth and Winter over mortal man.
Thus, and thus long, I say, at the behest
Of the man-minded Woman who here rules,
Here have I watch'd till yonder mountain-top

¹ The commentators generally understand these λαμπροὺς δυνάστας to mean Sun and Moon. Blomfield, I believe, admits they may be the Constellations by which the seasons were anciently marked, as in the case of the Pleiades further on in the Play. The Moon, I suppose, had no part to play in such a computation; and, as for the Sun, the beacon-fire surely implies a night-watch.

AGAMEMNON

Shall kindle with a signal-light from Troy.
And watch'd in vain, couch'd on the barren
stone,
Night after night, night after night, alone,
Ev'n by a wandering dream unvisited,
To which the terror of my post denies
The customary passage of closed eyes.
From which, when haply nodding, I would scare
Forbidden sleep, or charm long night away
With some old ballad of the good old times,
The foolish song falls presently to tears,
Remembering the glories of this House,
Where all is not as all was wont to be,—
No, nor as should—Alas, these royal walls,
Had they but tongue (as ears and eyes, men say)
Would tell strange stories!—but, for fear they
should,
Mine shall be mute as they are. Only this—
And this no treason surely—might I but,
But once more might I, see my lord again
Safe home! But once more look upon his face!
But once more take his hand in mine!—
Hilloa!
The words scarce from my lips.—Have the Gods
heard?
Or am I dreaming wide awake? as wide
Awake I am—The Light! The Light! The
Light
Long look'd for, long despair'd of, on the
Height!
Oh more to me than all the stars of night!

AGAMEMNON

More than the Morning-star!—more than the
Sun

Who breaks my nightly watch, this rising one
Which tells me that my year-long night is done!
When, shaking off the collar of my watch,
I first to Clytemnestra shall report
Such news as, if indeed a lucky cast
For her and Argos, sure a Main to me!
But grant the Gods, to all! A master-cast,
More than compensating all losses past;
And lighting up our altars with a fire
Of Victory that never shall expire!

[*Exit Warder. Daylight gradually
dawns, and enter slowly Chorus.*

CHORUS.

I.

Another rising of the sun
That rolls another year away,
Sees us through the portal dun
Dividing night and day
Like to phantoms from the crypt
Of Morpheus or of Hades slipt,
Through the sleeping city creeping,
Murmuring an ancient song
Of unvindicated wrong,
Ten year told as ten year long.
Since to revenge the great abuse
To Themis done by Priam's son,

AGAMEMNON

The Brother-Princes that, co-heir
Of Atreus, share his royal chair,
And from the authentic hand of Zeus
His delegated sceptre bear,
Startled Greece with such a cry
For Vengeance as a plunder'd pair
Of Eagles, over their aerial lair
Screaming, to whirlpool lash the waves of
air.

II.

The Robber, blinded in his own conceit,
Must needs think Retribution deaf and blind.
Fool ! not to know what tongue was in the
wind,
When Tellus shudder'd under flying feet,
When stricken Ocean under alien wings ;
Was there no Phœbus to denounce the flight
From Heav'n ? Nor those ten thousand Eyes of
Night ?
And, were no other eye nor ear of man
Or God awake, yet universal Pan,
For ever watching at the heart of things,
And Zeus, the Warden of domestic Right,
And the perennial sanctity of Kings,
Let loose the Fury who, though late
Retarded in the leash of Fate,
Once loosed, after the Sinner springs ;
Over Ocean's heights and hollows,
Into cave and forest follows,
Into fastest guarded town,

AGAMEMNON

Close on the Sinner's heel insists,
And, turn or baffle as he lists,
Dogs him inexorably down.

III.

Therefore to revenge the debt
To violated Justice due,
Armèd Hellas hand in hand
The iron toils of Ares drew
Over water, over land,
Over such a tract of years ;
Draught of blood abroad, of tears
At home, and unexhausted yet :
All the manhood Greece could muster,
And her hollow ships enclose ;
All that Troy from her capacious
Bosom pouring forth oppose ;
By the ships, beneath the wall,
And about the sandy plain,
Armour-glancing files advancing,
Fighting, flying, slaying, slain :
And among them, and above them,
Crested Heroes, twain by twain,
Lance to lance, and thrust to thrust,
Front erect, and, in a moment,
One or other roll'd in dust.
Till the better blood of Argos
Soaking in the Trojan sand,
In her silent half dispeopled
Cities, more than half unmann'd,
Little more of man to meet

AGAMEMNON

Than the helpless child, or hoary
Spectre of his second childhood,
Tottering on triple feet,
Like the idle waifs and strays
Blown together from the ways
Up and down the windy street.

IV.

But thus it is ; All bides the destined Hourst;
And Man, albeit with Justice at his side,
Fights in the dark against a secret Power
Not to be conquer'd—and how pacified ?

V.

For, before the Navy flush'd
Wing from shore, or lifted oar
To foam the purple brush'd ;
While about the altar hush'd
Throng'd the ranks of Greece thick-fold,
Ancient Chalcas in the bleeding
Volume of the Future reading
Evil things foresaw, foretold :
That, to revenge some old disgrace
Befall'n her sylvan train,
Some dumb familiar of the Chace
By Menelaus slain,
The Goddess Artemis would vex
The fleet of Greece with storms and checks :
That Troy should not be reach'd at all ;
Or—as the Gods themselves divide
In Heav'n to either mortal side—

AGAMEMNON

If ever reach'd, should never fall—
Unless at such a loss and cost
As counterpoises Won and Lost.

VI.

The Elder of the Royal Twain
Listen'd in silence, daring not arraign
 Ill omen, or rebuke the raven lips :
Then taking up the tangled skein
 Of Fate, he pointed to the ships ;
He sprang aboard : he gave the sign ;
 And blazing in his golden arms ahead,
Drew the long Navy in a glittering line
 After him like a meteor o'er the main.

VII.

So from Argos forth : and so
 O'er the rolling waters they,
Till in the roaring To-and-fro
 Of rock-lock'd Aulis brought to stay :
There the Goddess had them fast :
With a bitter northern blast
 Blew ahead and block'd the way :
Day by day delay ; to ship
And tackle damage and decay ;
Day by day to Prince and People
 Indignation and dismay.
' All the while that in the ribb'd
' Bosom of their vessels cribb'd,
' Tower-crown'd Troy above the waters
' Yonder, quaffing from the horn

AGAMEMNON

‘ Of Plenty, laughing them to scorn ’—
So would one to other say ;
And man and chief in rage and grief
Fretted and consumed away.

VIII.

Then to Sacrifice anew :
And again within the bleeding
Volume of the Future reading,
Once again the summon’d Seer
Evil, Evil, still fore-drew.
Day by day, delay, decay
To ship and tackle, chief and crew :
And but one way—one only way to appease
The Goddess, and the wind of wrath subdue ;
One way of cure so worse than the disease,
As, but to hear propound,
The Atreidæ struck their sceptres to the ground.

IX.

After a death-deep pause,
The Lord of man and armament his voice
Lifted into the silence—‘ Terrible choice !
‘ To base imprisonment of wind and flood
‘ Whether consign and sacrifice the band
‘ Of heroes gather’d in my name and cause ;
‘ Or thence redeem them by a daughter’s blood—
‘ A daughter’s blood shed by a father’s hand ;
‘ Shed by a father’s hand, and to atone
‘ The guilt of One—who, could the God endure

AGAMEMNON

‘ Propitiation by the Life impure,
‘ Should wash out her transgression with her own.’

X.

But, breaking on that iron multitude,
The Father’s cry no kindred echo woke :
And in the sullen silence that ensued
An unrelenting iron answer spoke.

XI.

At last his neck to that unnatural yoke
He bow’d : his hand to that unnatural stroke :
With growing purpose, obstinate as the wind
That block’d his fleet, so block’d his better mind,
To all the Father’s heart within him blind—
For thus it fares with men ; the seed
Of Evil, sown by seeming Need,
Grows, self-infatuation-nurst,
From evil Thought to evil Deed,
Incomprehensible at first,
And to the end of Life accurst.

XII.

And thus, the blood of that one innocent
Weigh’d light against one great accomplishment,
At last—at last—in the meridian blaze
Of Day, with all the Gods in Heaven agaze,
And armed Greece below—he came to dare—
After due preparation, pomp, and prayer,
He came—the wretched father—came to dare—
Himself—with sacrificial knife in hand,—

AGAMEMNON

Before the sacrificial altar stand,
To which—her sweet lips, sweetly wont to sing
Before him in the banquet-chamber, gagg'd,
Lest one ill word should mar the impious thing ;
Her saffron scarf about her fluttering,
Dumb as an all-but-speaking picture, dragg'd
Through the remorseless soldiery—

But soft !—

While I tell the more than oft-
Told Story, best in silence found,
Incense-breathing fires aloft
Up into the rising fire,
Into which the stars expire,
Of Morning mingle ; and a sound
As of Rumour at the heel
Of some great tidings gathers ground ;
And from portals that disclose
Before a fragrant air that blows
Them open, what great matter, Sirs,
Thus early Clytemnestra stirs,
Hither through the palace gate
Torch in hand, and step-elate,
Advancing, with the kindled Eyes
As of triumphant Sacrifice ?

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, Clytemnestra, my obeisance
Salutes your coming footstep, as her right
Who rightly occupies the fellow-chair
Of that now ten years widow'd of its Lord.

AGAMEMNON

But—be it at your pleasure ask'd, as answer'd—
What great occasion, almost ere Night's self
Rekindles into Morning from the Sun,
Has woke your Altar-fire to Sacrifice ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, never yet did Night—
Night of all Good the Mother, as men say,
Conceive a fairer issue than To-day !
Prepare your ears, Old man, for tidings such
As youthful hope would scarce anticipate.

CHORUS.

I have prepared them for such news as such
Preamble argues.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What if you be told—
Oh mighty sum in one small figure cast !—
That ten-year-toil'd-for Troy is ours at last ?

CHORUS.

‘ If told ! ’—Once more !—the word escaped our
ears,
With many a baffled rumour heretofore
Slipp'd down the wind of wasted Expectation.

AGAMEMNON

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Once more then ; and with unconditional
Assurance having hit the mark indeed
That Rumour aim'd at—Troy, with all the
 towers
Our burning vengeance leaves aloft, is ours.
Now speak I plainly ?

CHORUS.

Oh ! to make the tears,
That waited to bear witness in the eye,
Start, to convict our incredulity !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, blest conviction that enriches you
That lose the cause with all the victory !

CHORUS.

Ev'n so. But how yourself convinced before ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

By no less sure a witness than the God.

CHORUS.

What, in a dream ?

AGAMEMNON

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I am not one to trust
The vacillating witnesses of Sleep.

CHORUS.

Ay—but as surely undeluded by
The waking Will, that what we strongly *would*
Imaginates ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, like a doating girl.

CHORUS.

Oh, Clytemnestra, pardon mere Old Age
That, after so long starving upon Hope,
But slowly brooks his own Accomplishment.
The Ten-year war is done then ! Troy is taken !
The Gods have told you, and the Gods tell true—
But—how ? and when ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ev'n with the very birth
Of the good Night which mothers this best Day.

CHORUS.

To-day ! To-night ! but of Night's work in
Troy

AGAMEMNON

Who should inform the scarce awaken'd ear
Of Morn in Argos ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Hephaistos, the lame God,
And spriteliest of mortal messengers ;
Who, springing from the bed of burning Troy,
Hither, by fore-devised Intelligence
Agreed upon between my Lord and me,
Posted from dedicated Height to Height
The reach of land and sea that lies between.
And, first to catch him and begin the game,
Did Ida fire her forest-pine, and, waving,
Handed him on to that Hermæan steep
Of Lemnos ; Lemnos to the summit of
Zeus-consecrated Athos lifted ; whence,
As by the giant taken, so despatch'd,
The Torch of Conquest, traversing the wide
Ægæan with a sunbeam-stretching stride,
Struck up the drowsy watchers on Makistos ;
Who, flashing back the challenge, flash'd it on
To those who watch'd on the Messapian height.
With whose quick-kindling heather heap'd and
fired
The meteor-bearded messenger refresh'd,
Clearing Asopus at a bound, struck fire
From old Kithæron ; and, so little tired
As waxing even wanton with the sport,
Over the sleeping water of Gorgopis
Sprung to the Rock of Corinth ; thence to the cliffs

AGAMEMNON

Which stare down the Saronic Gulf, that now
Began to shiver in the creeping Dawn ;
Whence, for a moment on the neighbouring top
Of Arachnæum lighting, one last bound
Brought him to Agamemnon's battlements.
By such gigantic strides in such a Race
Where First and Last alike are Conquerors,
Posted the travelling Fire, whose Father-light
Ida conceived of burning Troy To-night.

CHORUS.

Woman, your words man-metal ring, and strike
Ev'n from the tuneless fibre of Old Age
Such martial unison as from the lips
Shall break into full Pæan by and by.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, think—think—think, old man, and in your
soul,
As if 'twere mirror'd in your outward eye,
Imagine what wild work a-doing there—
In Troy—to-night—to-day—this moment—how
Harmoniously, as in one vessel meet
Esil and Oil, meet Triumph and Despair,
Sluiced by the sword along the reeking street,
On which the Gods look down from burning air.
Slain, slaying—dying, dead—about the dead
Fighting to die themselves—maidens and wives
Lock'd by the locks, with their barbarian young,

AGAMEMNON

And torn away to slavery and shame
By hands all reeking with their Champion's blood.
Until, with execution weary, we
Fling down our slaughter-satiated swords,
To gorge ourselves on the unfinish'd feasts
Of poor old Priam and his sons ; and then,
Roll'd on rich couches never spread for us,
Ev'n now our sleep-besotted foreheads turn
Up to the very Sun that rises here.
Such is the lawful game of those who win
Upon so just a quarrel—so long fought :
Provided always that, with jealous care,
Retaliation wreaking upon those
Who our insulted Gods upon them drew,
We push not Riot to *their* Altar-foot ;
Remembering, on whichever mortal side
Engaged, the Gods are Gods in heav'n and earth,
And not to be insulted unavenged.
This let us take to heart, and keep in sight ;
Lest, having run victoriously thus far,
And turn'd the very pillar of our race,
Before we reach the long'd-for goal of Home
Nemesis overtake, or trip us up ;
Some ere safe shipp'd : or, launch'd upon the foam,
Ere touch'd the threshold of their native shore ;
Yea, or that reach'd, the threshold of the door
Of their own home ; from whatsoever corner
The jealous Power is ever on the watch
To compass arrogant Prosperity.
These are a woman's words ; for men to take,
Or disregarded drop them, as they will ;

AGAMEMNON

Enough for me, if having won the stake,
I pray the Gods with us to keep it still.

[*Exit* CLYTEMNESTRA.]

CHORUS.

Oh, sacred Night,
From whose unfathomable breast
Creative Order formed and saw
Chaos emerging into Law :
And now, committed with Eternal Right,
Who didst with star-entangled net invest
So close the guilty City as she slept,
That when the deadly fisher came to draw,
Not one of all the guilty fry through crept.

II.

Oh, Nemesis,
Night's daughter ! in whose bosoming abyss
Secretly sitting by the Sinner's sleeve,
Thou didst with self-confusion counterweave
His plot ; and when the fool his arrow sped,
Thine after-shot didst only not dismiss
Till certain not to miss the guilty head.

III.

Some think the Godhead, couching at his ease
Deep in the purple Heav'ns, serenely sees
Insult the altar of Eternal Right.
Fools ! For though Fortune seem to
misrequite,
And Retribution for a while forget ;

AGAMEMNON

Sooner or later she reclaims the debt
With usury that triples the amount
Of Nemesis with running Time's account.

IV.

For soon or late sardonic Fate
With Man against himself conspires ;
Puts on the mask of his desires :
Up the steps of Time elate
Leads him blinded with his pride,
And gathering as he goes along
The fuel of his suicide :
Until having topp'd the pyre
Which Destiny permits no higher,
Ambition sets himself on fire ;
In conflagration like the crime
Conspicuous through the world and time
Down amidst his brazen walls
The accumulated Idol falls
To shapeless ashes ; Demigod
Under the vulgar hoof down-trod
Whose neck he trod on ; not an eye
To weep his fall, nor lip to sigh
For him a prayer ; or, if there were,
No God to listen, or reply.

V.

And as the son his father's guilt may rue ;
And, by retort of justice, what the son
Has sinn'd, to ruin on the father run ;
So may the many help to pay the due

AGAMEMNON

Of guilt, remotely implicate with one.
And as the tree 'neath which a felon cowers,
With all its branch is blasted by the bolt
Of Justice launch'd from Heav'n at *his* revolt ;
Thus with old Priam, with his royal line,
Kindred and people ; yea, the very towers
They crouch'd in, built by masonry divine.

VI.

Like a dream through sleep she glided
Through the silent city gate,
By a guilty Hermes guided
On the feather'd feet of Theft ;
Leaving between those she left
And those she fled to lighted Discord,
Unextinguishable Hate ;
Leaving him whom least she should,
Menelaus brave and good,
Scarce believing in the mutter'd
Rumour, in the worse than utter'd
Omen of the wailing maidens,
Of the shaken hoary head,
Of deserted board and bed.

For the phantom of the lost one
Haunts him in the wonted places ;
Hall and Chamber, which he paces
Hither, Thither, listening, looking,
Phantom-like himself alone ;
Till he comes to loathe the faces
Of the marble mute Colossi,
Godlike Forms, and half-divine,

AGAMEMNON

Founders of the Royal line,
Who with all unalter'd Quiet
Witness all and make no sign.
But the silence of the chambers,
And the shaken hoary head,
And the voices of the mourning
Women, and of ocean wailing,
Over which with unavailing
Arms he reaches, as to hail
The phantom of a flying sail—
All but answer, Fled ! fled ! fled !
False ! dishonour'd ! worse than dead !

VII.

At last the sun goes down along the bay,
And with him drags detested Day.
He sleeps ; and, dream-like as she fled, beside
His pillow, Dream indeed, behold ! his Bride
Once more in more than bridal beauty stands ;
But, ever as he reaches forth his hands,
Slips from them back into the viewless deep,
On those soft silent wings that walk the ways of
sleep.

VIII.

Not beside thee in the chamber,
Menelaus, any more ;
But with him she fled with, pillow'd
On the summer softly-billow'd
Ocean, into dimple wreathing
Underneath a breeze of amber

AGAMEMNON

Air that, as from Eros breathing,
Fill'd the sail and flew before ;
Floating on the summer seas
Like some sweet Effigies
Of Eirene's self, or sweeter
Aphrodite, sweeter still :
With the Shepherd, from whose luckless
Hand upon the Phrygian hill,
Of the three Immortals, She
The fatal prize of Beauty bore,
Floating with him o'er the foam
She rose from, to the Shepherd's home
On the Ionian shore.

IX.

Down from the City to the water-side
Old Priam, with his princely retinue.
By many a wondering Phrygian follow'd,
drew
To welcome and bear in the Goddess-bride,
Whom some propitious wind of Fortune blew
From whence they knew not o'er the waters
wide
Among the Trojan people to abide,
A pledge of Love and Joy for ever—Yes ;
As one who drawing from the leopardess
Her suckling cub, and, fascinated by
The little Savage of the lustrous eye,
Bears home, for all to fondle and caress,
And be the very darling of the house
It makes a den of blood of by and by.

AGAMEMNON

x.

For the wind, that amber blew,
Tempest in its bosom drew,
 Soon began to hiss and roar ;
And the sweet Effigies
That amber breeze and summer seas
 Had wafted to the Ionian shore,
 By swift metamorphosis
Turn'd into some hideous, hated,
Fury of Revenge, and fated
 Hierophant of Nemesis ;
 Who, growing with the day and hour,
 Grasp'd the wall, and topp'd the tower,
 And, when the time came, by its throat
 The victim City seized, and smote.

xi.

But now to be resolved, whether indeed
 Those fires of Night spoke truly, or mistold
 To cheat a doating woman ; for, behold,
Advancing from the shore with solemn speed,
 A Herald from the Fleet, his footsteps roll'd
In dust, Haste's thirsty consort, but his brow
 Check-shadow'd with the nodding Olive-
 bough ;
Who shall interpret us the speechless sign
 Of the fork'd tongue that preys upon the pine.

HERALD.

Oh, Fatherland of Argos, back to whom

AGAMEMNON

After ten years do I indeed return
Under the dawn of this auspicious day !
Of all the parted anchors of lost Hope
That this, depended least on, yet should hold ;
Amid so many men to me so dear
About me dying, yet myself exempt
Return to live what yet of life remains
Among my own ; among my own at last
To share the blest communion of the Dead !
Oh, welcome, welcome, welcome once again
My own dear Country and the light she draws
From the benignant Heav'ns ; and all the Gods
Who guard her ; Zeus Protector first of all ;
And Phœbus, by this all-restoring dawn
Who heals the wounds his arrows dealt so fast
Beside Scamander ; and not last nor least
Among the Powers engaged upon our side,
Hermes, the Herald's Patron, and his Pride ;
Who, having brought me safely through the war,
Now brings me back to tell the victory
Into my own belovèd country's ear ;
Who, all the more by us, the more away,
Beloved, will greet with Welcome no less dear
This remnant of the unremorseful spear.
And, oh, you Temples, Palaces, and throned
Colossi, that affront the rising sun,
If ever yet, your marble foreheads now
Bathe in the splendour of returning Day
To welcome back your so long absent Lord ;
Who by Zeus' self directed to the spot
Of Vengeance, and the special instrument

AGAMEMNON

Of Retribution put into his hands,
Has undermined, uprooted, and destroy'd,
Till scarce one stone upon another stands,
The famous Citadel, that, deeply cast
For crime, has all the forfeit paid at last.

CHORUS.

Oh hail and welcome, Herald of good news !
Welcome and hail ! and doubt not thy return
As dear to us as thee.

HERALD.

To me so dear,
After so long despair'd of, that, for fear
Life's after-draught the present should belie,
One might implore the Gods ev'n now to die !

CHORUS.

Oh, your soul hunger'd after home !

HERALD.

So sore,
That sudden satisfaction of once more
Return weeps out its surfeit at my eyes.

CHORUS.

And ours, you see, contagiously, no less
The same long grief, and sudden joy, confess.

AGAMEMNON

HERALD.

What ! Argos for her missing children yearn'd
As they for her, then ?

CHORUS.

Ay ; perhaps and more,
Already pining with an inward sore.

HERALD.

How so ?

CHORUS.

Nay, Silence, that has best endured
The pain, may best dismiss the memory.

HERALD.

Ev'n so. For who, unless the God himself,
Expects to live his life without a flaw ?
Why, once begin to open that account,
Might not *we* tell for ten good years to come
Of all we suffer'd in the ten gone by ?
Not the mere course and casualty of war,
Alarum, March, Battle, and such hard knocks
As foe with foe expects to give and take ;
But all the complement of miseries
That go to swell a long campaign's account.
Cramm'd close aboard the ships, hard bed, hard
board :

AGAMEMNON

Or worse perhaps while foraging ashore
In winter time ; when, if not from the walls,
Pelted from Heav'n by Day, to couch by
Night

Between the falling dewes and rising dampes
That elf'd the locks, and set the body fast
With cramp and ague ; or, to mend the matter,
Good mother Ida from her winter top
Flinging us down a coverlet of snow.

Or worst perhaps in Summer, toiling in
The bloody harvest-field of torrid sand,
When not an air stirr'd the fierce Asian noon,
And ev'n the sea sleep-sicken'd in his bed.

But why lament the Past, as past it is ?
If idle for the Dead who feel no more,
Idler for us to whom this blissful Dawn
Shines doubly bright against the stormy Past ;
Who, after such predicament and toil,
Boast, once more standing on our mother soil,

That Zeus, who sent us to revenge the crime
Upon the guilty people, now recalls
To hang their trophies on our temple walls
For monumental heir-looms to all time.

CHORUS.

Oh, but Old age, however slow to learn,
Not slow to learn, nor after you repeat,
Lesson so welcome, Herald of the Fleet !
But here is Clytemnestra ; be you first
To bless her ears, as mine, with news so sweet.

AGAMEMNON

CLYTEMNESTRA.

I sang my Song of Triumph ere he came,
Alone I sang it while the City slept,
And these wise Senators, with winking eyes,
Look'd grave, and weigh'd mistrustfully my word,
As the light coinage of a woman's brain.
And so they went their way. But not the less
From those false fires I lit my altar up,
And, woman-wise, held on my song, until
The City taking up the note from me,
Scarce knowing why, about that altar flock'd,
Where, like the Priest of Victory, I stood,
Torch-handed, drenching in triumphant wine
The flame that from the smouldering incense
rose.

Now what more needs? This Herald of the
Day

Adds but another witness to the Night ;
And I will hear no more from other lips,
Till from my husband Agamemnon all,
Whom with all honour I prepare to meet.
Oh, to a loyal woman what so sweet

As once more wide the gate of welcome fling
To the loved Husband whom the Gods once more

After long travail home triumphant bring ;
Where he shall find her, as he left before,
Fix'd like a trusty watchdog at the door,
Tractable him-ward, but inveterate
Against the doubtful stranger at the gate ;
And not a seal within the house but still

AGAMEMNON

Inviolable, under a woman's trust
Incapable of taint as gold of rust.

[*Exit* CLYTEMNESTRA.]

HERALD.

A boast not misbeseeeming a true woman.

CHORUS.

For then no boast at all. But she says well ;
And Time interprets all. Enough for us
To praise the Gods for Agamemnon's safe,
And more than safe return. And Menelaus,
The other half of Argos—What of him ?

HERALD.

Those that I most would gladden with good
news,
And on a day like this—with fair but false
I dare not.

CHORUS.

What, must fair then needs be false ?

HERALD.

Old man, the Gods grant somewhat, and with-
hold
As seems them good : a time there is for Praise,

AGAMEMNON

A time for Supplication : nor is it well
To twit the celebration of their largess,
Reminding them of somewhat they withhold.

CHORUS.

Yet till we know how much withheld or granted,
We know not how the balance to adjust
Of Supplication or of Praise.

HERALD.

Alas,
The Herald who returns with downcast eyes,
And leafless brow prophetic of Reverse,
Let him at once—at once let him, I say,
Lay the whole burden of Ill-tidings down
In the mid-market place. But why should one
Returning with the garland on his brow
Be stopp'd to name the single missing leaf
Of which the Gods have stinted us ?

CHORUS.

Alas,
The putting of a fearful question by
Is but to ill conjecture worse reply !
You bring not back then—do not leave behind—
What Menelaus was ?

HERALD.

The Gods forbid !
Safe shipp'd with all the host.

AGAMEMNON .

CHORUS.

Well but—how then ?
Surely no tempest—

HERALD.

Ay ! by that one word
Hitting the centre of a boundless sorrow !

CHORUS.

Well, but if peradventure from the fleet
Parted—not lost ?

HERALD.

None but the eye of Day,
Now woke, knows all the havoc of the Night.
For Night it was ; all safe aboard—sail set,
And oars all beating home ; when suddenly,
As if those old antagonists had sworn
New strife between themselves for our destruction,
The sea, that tamely let us mount his back,
Began to roar and plunge under a lash
Of tempest from the thundering heavens so fierce
As, falling on our fluttering navy, some
Scatter'd, or whirl'd away like flakes of foam :
Or, huddling wave on wave, so ship on ship
Like fighting eagles on each other fell,
And beak, and wing, and claws, entangled, tore

AGAMEMNON

To pieces one another, or dragg'd down.
So when at last the tardy-rising Sun
Survey'd, and show'd, the havoc Night had done,
We, whom some God—or Fortune's self, I
think—

Seizing the helm, had steer'd as man could not,
Beheld the waste Ægæan wilderness
Strown with the shatter'd forest of the fleet,
Trunk, branch, and foliage ; and yet worse, I
ween,

The flower of Argos floating dead between.
Then we, scarce trusting in our own escape,
And saving such as yet had life to save,
Along the heaving wilderness of wave
Went ruminating, who of those we miss'd
Might yet survive, who lost : the saved, no
doubt,

As sadly speculating after us.
Of whom, if Menelaus—and the Sun
(A prayer which all the Gods in Heav'n fulfil !)
Behold him on the water breathing still ;
Doubt not that Zeus, under whose special showers
And suns the royal growth of Atreus towers,
Will not let perish stem, and branch, and fruit,
By loss of one corroborating root.

CHORUS.

Oh, Helen, Helen, Helen ! oh, fair name
And fatal, of the fatal-fairest dame
That ever blest or blinded human eyes !

AGAMEMNON

Of mortal women Queen beyond compare,
As she whom the foam lifted to the skies
Is Queen of all who breathe immortal air !
Whoever, and from whatsoever wells
Of Divination, drew the syllables
By which we name thee ; who shall ever dare
In after time the fatal name to wear,
Or would, to be so fatal, be so fair ?
Whose dowry was a Husband's shame ;
Whose nuptial torch was Troy in flame ;
Whose bridal Chorus, groans and cries ;
Whose banquet, brave men's obsequies ;
Whose Hymenæal retinue,
The winged dogs of War that flew
Over lands and over seas,
Following the tainted breeze,
Till, Scamander reed among,
Their fiery breath and bloody tongue
The fatal quarry found and slew ;
And, having done the work to which
The God himself halloo'd them, back
Return a maim'd and scatter'd pack.

II.

And he for whose especial cause
Zeus his winged instrument
With the lightning in his claws
From the throne of thunder sent :
He for whom the sword was drawn :
Mountain ashes fell'd and sawn ;

AGAMEMNON

And the armed host of Hellas
Cramm'd within them, to discharge
On the shore to bleed at large ;
He, in mid accomplishment
Of Justice, from his glory rent !
What ten years had hardly won,
In a single night undone ;
And on earth what saved and gain'd,
By the ravin sea distrai'n'd.

III.

Such is the sorrow of this royal house ;
And none in all the City but forlorn
Under its own peculiar sorrow bows.
For the stern God who, deaf to human love,
Grudges the least abridgment of the tale
Of human blood once pledged to him, above
The centre of the murder-dealing crowd
Suspends in air his sanguinary scale ;
And for the blooming Hero gone a-field
Homeward remits a beggarly return
Of empty helmet, fallen sword and shield,
And some light ashes in a little urn.

IV.

Then wild and high goes up the cry
To heav'n, ' So true ! so brave ! so fair !
' The young colt of the flowing hair
' And flaming eye, and now—look there !

AGAMEMNON

‘Ashes and arms!’ or, ‘Left behind
‘Unburied, in the sun and wind
‘To wither, or become the feast
‘Of bird obscene, or unclean beast;
‘The good, the brave, without a grave—
‘All to redeem *her* from the shame
‘To which she sold her self and name!’—
For such insinuation in the dark
About the City travels like a spark;
Till the pent tempest into lightning breaks,
And takes the topmost pinnacle for mark.

v.

But avaunt all evil omen!
Perish many, so the State
They die for live inviolate;
Which, were all her mortal leafage
In the blast of Ares scatter’d,
So herself at heart unshatter’d,
In due season she retrieves
All her wasted wealth of leaves,
And age on age shall spread and rise
To cover earth and breathe the skies.
While the rival at her side
Who the wrath of Heav’n defied,
By the lashing blast, or flashing
Bolt of Heav’n comes thunder-crashing,
Top and lop, and trunk and bough,
Down, for ever down. And now,
He to whom the Zeus of Vengeance

AGAMEMNON

Did commit the bolt of Fate—
Agamemnon—how shall I
With a Pæan not too high
For mortal glory, to provoke
From the Gods a counter-stroke,
Nor below desert so lofty,

Suitably felicitate ?
Such as chasten'd Age for due
May give, and Manhood take for true.
For, as many men comply
From founts no deeper than the eye

With others' sorrows ; many more,
With a Welcome from the lips,
That far the halting heart outstrips,
Fortune's Idol fall before.

Son of Atreus, I premise,

When at first the means and manhood
Of the cities thou didst stake
For a wanton woman's sake,

I might grudge the sacrifice ;
But, the warfare once begun,
Hardly fought and hardly won,
Now from Glory's overflowing
Horn of Welcome all her glowing

Honours, and with uninvincible
Hand, before your advent throwing,
I salute, and bid thee welcome,

Son of Atreus, Agamemnon,
Zeus' revenging Right-hand, Lord

Of taken Troy and righted Greece :
Bid thee from the roving throne

AGAMEMNON

Of War the reeking steed release ;
Leave the laurell'd ship to ride
Anchor'd in her country's side,
And resume the royal helm
Of thy long-abandon'd realm :
What about the State or Throne
Of good or evil since has grown,
Alter, cancel, or complete ;
And to well or evil-doer
Even-handed Justice mete.

*Enter AGAMEMNON in his chariot, CASSANDRA
following in another.*

AGAMEMNON.

First, as first due, my Country I salute,
And all her tutelary Gods ; all those
Who, having sent me forth, now bring me back,
After full retribution wrought on those
Who retribution owed us, and the Gods
In full consistory determined ; each,
With scarce a swerving eye to Mercy's side,
Dropping his vote into the urn of blood,
Caught and consuming in whose fiery wrath,
The stately City, from her panting ashes
Into the nostril of revolted Heav'n
Gusts of expiring opulence puffs up.¹

¹ Those who know the Greek will scarce accuse me of over-alliteration in this line, which runs in the original thus,

Spodos propempei pionas ploutou pnoas.

AGAMEMNON

For which, I say, the Gods alone be thank'd ;
By whose contrivance round about the wall
We drew the belt of Ares, and laid bare
The flank of Ilium to the Lion-horse,¹
Who sprung by night over the city wall,
And foal'd his iron progeny within,
About the setting of the Pleiades.²
Thus much by way of prelude to the Gods.
For you, oh white-hair'd senators of Argos,
Your measured Welcome I receive for just ;
Aware on what a tickle base of fortune
The monument of human Glory stands ;
And, for humane congratulation, knowing
How, smile as may the mask, the man behind
Frets at the fortune that degrades his own.
This, having heard of from the wise, myself,
From long experience in the ways of men,
Can vouch for—what a shadow of a shade
Is human loyalty ; and, as a proof,
Of all the Host that fill'd the Grecian ship,
And pour'd at large along the field of Troy,
One only Chief—and he, too, like yourself,
At first with little stomach for the cause—
The wise Odysseus—once in harness, he
With all his might pull'd in the yoke with me,
Through envy, obloquy, and opposition :

¹ Dr. Donaldson tells us in his *Varronianus* (says Paley), that the Lion was the symbol of the Atreidæ ; and Pausanias writes that part of the ancient walls of Mycenæ was yet standing in his day, and Lions on the gate. Wordsworth (*Athens and Attica*) says the Lion was often set up to commemorate a victory.

² 'About the setting of the Pleiades,' is about the end of Autumn.

AGAMEMNON

And in Odysseus' honour, live or dead—
For yet we know not which—shall this be said.
Of which enough. For other things of moment
To which you point, or human or divine,
We shall forthwith consider and adjudge
In seasonable council ; what is well,
Or in our absence well deserving, well
Establish and requite ; what not, redress
With salutary caution ; or, if need,
With the sharp edge of Justice ; and to health
Restore, and right, our ailing Commonwealth.
Now, first of all, by my own altar-hearth
To thank the Gods for my return, and pray
That Victory, which thus far by my side
Has flown with us, with us may still abide.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA from the Palace.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh Men of Argos, count it not a shame
If a fond wife, and one whom riper years
From Youth's becoming bashfulness excuse,
Dares own her love before the face of men ;
Nor leaving it for others to enhance,
Simply declares the wretched widowhood
Which these ten years she has endured, since first
Her husband Agamemnon went to Troy.
'Tis no light matter, let me tell you, Sirs,
A woman left in charge of house and home—
And when that house and home a Kingdom—and

AGAMEMNON

She left alone to rule it—and ten years !
Beside dissent and discontent at home,
Storm'd from abroad with contrary reports,
Now fair, now foul ; but still as time wore on
Growing more desperate ; as dangerous
Unto the widow'd kingdom as herself.
Why, had my husband there but half the wounds
Fame stabb'd him with, he were before me now,
Not the whole man we see him, but a body
Gash'd into network ; ay, or had he died
But half as often as Report gave out,
He would have needed thrice the cloak of earth
To cover him, that triple Geryon
Lies buried under in the world below.
Thus, back and forward baffled, and at last
So desperate—that, if I be here alive
To tell the tale, no thanks to me for that,
Whose hands had twisted round my neck the
noose

Which others loosen'd—my Orestes too
In whose expanding manhood day by day
My Husband I perused—and, by the way,
Whom wonder not, my Lord, not seeing here ;
My simple mother-love, and jealousy
Of civic treason—ever as you know,
Most apt to kindle when the lord away—
Having bestow'd him, out of danger's reach,
With Strophius of Phocis, wholly yours
Bound by the generous usages of war,
That make the once-won foe so fast a friend.
Thus, widow'd of my son as of his sire,

AGAMEMNON

No wonder if I wept—not drops, but showers,
The ten years' night through which I watch'd in
vain

The star that was to bring him back to me ;
Or, if I slept, a sleep so thin as scared
Even at the slight incursion of the gnat ;
And yet more thick with visionary terrors
Than thrice the waking while had occupied.
Well, I have borne all this : all this have borne,
Without a grudge against the wanderer,
Whose now return makes more than rich amends
For all ungrateful absence—Agamemnon,
My Lord and Husband ; Lord of Argos ; Troy's
Confounder : Mainstay of the realm of Greece ;
And Master-column of the house of Atreus—
Oh wonder not if I accumulate
All honour and endearment on his head !
If to his country, how much more to me,
Welcome, as land to sailors long at sea,
Or water in the desert ; whose return
Is fire to the forsaken winter-hearth ;
Whose presence, like the rooted Household Tree
That, winter-dead so long, anew puts forth
To shield us from the Dogstar, what time Zeus
Wrings the tart vintage into blissful juice.
Down from the chariot thou standest in,
Crown'd with the flaming towers of Troy, descend,
And to this palace, rich indeed with thee,
But beggar-poor without, return ! And ye,
My women, carpet all the way before,
From the triumphal carriage to the door,

AGAMEMNON

With all the gold and purple in the chest
Stored these ten years ; and to what purpose
stored,
Unless to strew the footsteps of their Lord
Returning to his unexpected rest !

AGAMEMNON.

Daughter of Leda, Mistress of my house,
Beware lest loving Welcome of your Lord,
Measuring itself by his protracted absence,
Exceed the bound of rightful compliment,
And better left to other lips than yours.
Address me not, address me not, I say
With dust-adoring adulation, meeter
For some barbarian Despot from his slave ;
Nor with invidious Purple strew my way,
Fit only for the footstep of a God
Lighting from Heav'n to earth. Let whoso will
Trample their glories underfoot, not I.
Woman, I charge you, honour me no more
Than as the man I am ; if honour-worth,
Needing no other trapping but the fame
Of the good deed I clothe myself withal ;
And knowing that, of all their gifts to man,
No greater gift than Self-sobriety
The Gods vouchsafe him in the race of life :
Which, after thus far running, if I reach
The goal in peace, it shall be well for me.

AGAMEMNON

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Why, how think you old Priam would have
walk'd
Had he return'd to Troy your conqueror,
As you to Hellas his ?

AGAMEMNON.

What then ? Perhaps
Voluptuary Asiatic-like,
On gold and purple.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Well, and grudging this,
When all that out before your footstep flows
Ebbs back into the treasury again ;
Think how much more, had Fate the tables turn'd,
Irrevocably from those coffers gone,
For those barbarian feet to walk upon,
To buy your ransom back !

AGAMEMNON.

Enough, enough !
I know my reason.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

What ! the jealous God ?
Or, peradventure, yet more envious Man ?

AGAMEMNON

AGAMEMNON.

And *that* of no small moment.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

No ; the one
Sure proof of having won what others would.

AGAMEMNON.

No matter—Strife but ill becomes a woman.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And frank submission to her simple wish
How well becomes the Soldier in his strength !

AGAMEMNON.

And I must then submit ?

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, Agamemnon,
Deny me not this first Desire on this
First Morning of your long-desired Return.

AGAMEMNON.

But not till I have put these sandals off,
That, slave-like, too officiously would pander
Between the purple and my dainty feet.

AGAMEMNON

For fear, for fear indeed, some Jealous eye
From heav'n above, or earth below, should strike
The Man who walks the earth Immortal-like.
So much for that. For this same royal maid,
Cassandra, daughter of King Priamus,
Whom, as the flower of all the spoil of Troy,
The host of Hellas dedicates to me ;
Entreat her gently ; knowing well that none
But submit hardly to a foreign yoke ;
And those of Royal blood most hardly brook.
That if I sin thus trampling underfoot

A woof in which the Heav'ns themselves are
dyed,
The jealous God may less resent his crime,
Who mingles human mercy with his pride.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

The Sea there is, and shall the sea be dried ?
Fount inexhaustibler of purple grain
Than all the wardrobes of the world could drain ;
And Earth there is, whose dusky closets hide
The precious metal wherewith not in vain
The Gods themselves this Royal house provide ;
For what occasion worthier, or more meet,
Than now to carpet the victorious feet
Of Him who, thus far having done their will,
Shall now their last About-to-be fulfil ?

[AGAMEMNON *descends from his chariot, and goes
with CLYTEMNESTRA into the house, CASSANDRA
remaining.*]

AGAMEMNON

CHORUS.

About the nations runs a saw,
That Over-good ill-fortune breeds ;
And true that, by the mortal law,
Fortune her spoilt children feeds
To surfeit, such as sows the seeds
Of Insolence, that, as it grows,
The flower of Self-repentance blows.
And true that Virtue often leaves
The marble walls and roofs of kings,
And underneath the poor man's eaves
On smoky rafter folds her wings.

II.

Thus the famous city, flown
With insolence, and overgrown,
Is humbled : all her splendour blown
To smoke : her glory laid in dust ;
Who shall say by doom unjust ?
But should He to whom the wrong
Was done, and Zeus himself made strong
To do the vengeance He decreed—
At last returning with the meed
He wrought for—should the jealous Eye
That blights full-blown prosperity
Pursue him—then indeed, indeed,
Man should hoot and scare aloof
Good-fortune lighting on the roof ;

AGAMEMNON

Yea, even Virtue's self forsake
If Glory follow'd in the wake ;
Seeing bravest, best, and wisest
But the playthings of a day,
Which a shadow can trip over,
And a breath can puff away.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*re-entering*).

Yet for a moment let me look on her—
This, then, is Priam's daughter—
Cassandra, and a Prophetess, whom Zeus
Has giv'n into my hands to minister
Among my slaves. Didst thou prophesy that ?
Well—some more famous have so fall'n before—
Ev'n Herakles, the son of Zeus, they say
Was sold, and bow'd his shoulder to the yoke.

CHORUS.

And, if needs must a captive, better far
Of some old house that affluent Time himself
Has taught the measure of prosperity,
That drunk with sudden superfluity.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ev'n so. You hear ? Therefore at once descend
From that triumphal chariot—And yet
She keeps her station still, her laurel on,
Disdaining to make answer.

AGAMEMNON

CHORUS.

Nay, perhaps,
Like some stray swallow blown across the seas,
Interpreting no twitter but her own.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

But, if barbarian, still interpreting
The universal language of the hand.

CHORUS.

Which yet again she does not seem to see,
Staring before her with wide-open eyes
As in a trance.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, ay, a prophetess—
Phœbus Apollo's minion once—Whose now ?
A time will come for her. See you to it :

A greater business now is on my hands :
For lo ! the fire of Sacrifice is lit,
And the grand victim by the altar stands.

[*Exit* CLYTEMNESTRA.]

CHORUS (*continuing*).

Still a mutter'd and half-blind
Superstition haunts mankind,
That, by some divine decree

AGAMEMNON

Yet by mortal undivined,
Mortal Fortune must not over-
 Leap the bound he cannot see ;
For that even wisest labour
 Lofty-building, builds to fall,
Evermore a jealous neighbour
 Undermining floor and wall.
So that on the smoothest water
 Sailing, in a cloudless sky,
The wary merchant overboard
Flings something of his precious hoard
 To pacify the jealous eye,
That will not suffer man to swell
Over human measure. Well,
As the Gods have order'd we
Must take—I know not—let it be.
But, by rule of retribution,
 Hidden, too, from human eyes,
Fortune in her revolution,
 If she fall, shall fall to rise :
And the hand of Zeus dispenses
 Even measure in the main :
One short harvest recompenses
 With a glut of golden grain ;
So but men in patience wait
 Fortune's counter-revolution
Axled on eternal Fate ;
And the Sisters three that twine,
Cut not short the vital line ;
For indeed the purple seed
Of life once shed—

AGAMEMNON

CASSANDRA.

Phæbus Apollo !

CHORUS.

Hark !

The lips at last unlocking.

CASSANDRA.

Phæbus ! Phæbus !

CHORUS.

Well, what of Phæbus, maiden ? though a name
'Tis but disparagement to call upon
In misery.

CASSANDRA.

Apollo ! Apollo ! Again !
Oh, the burning arrow through the brain !
Phæbus Apollo ! Apollo !

CHORUS.

Seemingly

Possess'd indeed—whether by—

CASSANDRA.

Phæbus ! Phæbus !
Thorough trampled ashes, blood, and fiery rain,

AGAMEMNON

Over water seething, and behind the breathing
Warhorse in the darkness—till you rose again—
Took the helm—took the rein—

CHORUS.

As one that half asleep at dawn recalls
A night of Horror !

CASSANDRA.

Hither, whither, Phœbus ? And with whom,
Leading me, lighting me—

CHORUS.

I can answer that—

CASSANDRA.

Down to what slaughter-house ?
Foh ! the smell of carnage through the door
Scares me from it—drags me tow'rd it—
Phœbus ! Apollo ! Apollo !

CHORUS.

One of the dismal prophet-pack, it seems,
That hunt the trail of blood. But here at fault—
This is no den of slaughter, but the house
Of Agamemnon.

AGAMEMNON

CASSANDRA.

Down upon the towers
Phantoms of two mangled Children hover—and
a famish'd man,
At an empty table glaring, seizes and devours !

CHORUS.

Thyestes and his children ! Strange enough
For any maiden from abroad to know,
Or, knowing—

CASSANDRA.

And look ! in the chamber below
The terrible Woman, listening, watching,
Under a mask, preparing the blow
In the fold of her robe—

CHORUS.

Nay, but again at fault :
For in the tragic story of this House—
Unless, indeed, the fatal Helen—
No woman—

CASSANDRA.

No Woman—Tisiphone ! Daughter
Of Tartarus—love-grinning Woman above,
Dragon-tail'd under—honey-tongued, Harpy-
claw'd,

AGAMEMNON

Into the glittering meshes of slaughter
She wheedles, entices, him into the poisonous
Fold of the serpent—

CHORUS.

Peace, mad woman, peace !
Whose stony lips once open vomit out
Such uncouth horrors.

CASSANDRA.

I tell you the lioness
Slaughters the Lion asleep ; and lifting
Her blood-dripping fangs buried deep in his
mane,
Glaring about her insatiable, bellowing,
Bounds hither—Phœbus, Apollo, Apollo, Apollo !
Whither have you led me, under night alive
with fire,
Through the trampled ashes of the city of my
sire,
From my slaughter'd kinsmen, fallen throne,
insulted shrine,
Slave-like to be butcher'd, the daughter of a
Royal line ?

CHORUS.

And so returning, like a nightingale
Returning to the passionate note of woe
By which the silence first was broken !

AGAMEMNON

CASSANDRA.

Oh,

A nightingale, a nightingale, indeed,
That, as she 'Itys ! Itys ! Itys !' so
I 'Helen ! Helen ! Helen !' having sung
Amid my people, now to those who flung
And trampled on the nest, and slew the young,
Keep crying 'Blood ! blood ! blood !' and none
will heed !

Now what for me is this prophetic weed,
And what for me is this immortal crown,
Who like a wild swan from Scamander's reed
Chaunting her death-song float Cocytus-down ?
There let the fatal Leaves to perish lie !
To perish, or enrich some other brow
With that all-fatal gift of Prophecy
They palpitated under Him who now,
Checking his flaming chariot in mid sky,
With divine irony sees disadorn
The wretch his love has made the people's scorn,
The raving quean, the mountebank, the scold,
Who, wrapt up in the ruin she foretold
With those who would not listen, now descends
To that dark kingdom where his empire ends.

CHORUS.

Strange that Apollo should the laurel wreath
Of Prophecy he crown'd your head withal
Himself disgrace. But something have we heard
Of some divine revenge for slighted love.

AGAMEMNON

CASSANDRA.

Ay—and as if in malice to attest
With one expiring beam of Second-sight
Wherewith his victim he has cursed and blest,
Ere quench'd for ever in descending night ;
As from behind a veil no longer peeps
The Bride of Truth, nor from their hidden deeps
Darkle the waves of Prophecy, but run
Clear from the very fountain of the Sun.
Ye call'd—and rightly call'd—me bloodhound ;
ye
That like old lagging dogs in self-despite
Must follow up the scent with me ; with me,
Who having smelt the blood about this house
Already spilt, now bark of more to be.
For, though you hear them not, the infernal
Choir
Whose dread antiphony forswears the lyre,
Who now are chaunting of that grim carouse
Of blood with which the children fed their Sire,
Shall never from their dreadful chorus stop
Till all be counter-pledged to the last drop.

CHORUS.

Hinting at what indeed has long been done,
And widely spoken, no Apollo needs ;
And for what else you aim at—still in dark
And mystic language—

AGAMEMNON

CASSANDRA.

Nay, then, in the speech,
She that reproved me was so glib to teach—
Before yon Sun a hand's-breadth in the skies
He moves in shall have moved, those age-sick
eyes
Shall open wide on Agamemnon slain
Before your very feet. Now, speak I plain?

CHORUS.

Blasphemer, hush !

CASSANDRA.

Ay, hush the mouth you may,
But not the murder.

CHORUS.

Murder ! But the Gods—

CASSANDRA.

The Gods !
Who even now are their accomplices.

CHORUS.

Woman !—Accomplices—With whom ?—

AGAMEMNON

CASSANDRA.

With Her,
Who brandishing aloft the axe of doom,
That just has laid one victim at her feet,
Looks round her for that other, without whom
The banquet of revenge were incomplete.
Yet ere I fall will I prelude the strain
Of Triumph, that in full I shall repeat
When, looking from the twilight Underland,
I welcome Her as she descends amain,
Gash'd like myself, but by a dearer hand.
For that old murder'd Lion with me slain,
Rolling an awful eyeball through the gloom
He stalks about of Hades up to Day,
Shall rouse the whelp of exile far away,
His only authentic offspring, ere the grim
Wolf crept between his Lioness and him ;
Who with one stroke of Retribution, her
Who did the deed, and her adulterer,
Shall drive to hell ; and then, himself pursued
By the wing'd Furies of his Mother's blood,
Shall drag about the yoke of Madness, till
Released, when Nemesis has gorged her fill,
By that same God, in whose prophetic ray
Viewing To-morrow mirror'd as To-day,
And that this House of Atreus the same wine
Themselves must drink they brew'd for me and
mine ;
I close my lips for ever with one prayer,

AGAMEMNON

That the dark Warder of the World below
Would ope the portal at a single blow.

CHORUS.

And the raving voice, that rose
Out of silence into speech
Over-shooting human reach,
Back to silence foams and blows,
Leaving all my bosom heaving—
Wrath and raving all, one knows ;
Prophet-seeming, but if ever
Of the Prophet-God possess'd,
By the Prophet's self confess'd
God-abandon'd—woman's shrill
Anguish into tempest rising,
Louder as less listen'd.

Still—

Spite of Reason, spite of Will,
What unwelcome, what unholy,
Vapour of Foreboding, slowly
Rising from the central soul's
Recesses, all in darkness rolls ?
What ! shall Age's torpid ashes
Kindle at the ransom spark
Of a raving maiden ?—Hark !
What was that behind the wall ?
A heavy blow—a groan—a fall—
Some one crying—Listen further—
Hark again then, crying ' Murder !'
Some one—who then ? Agamemnon ?

AGAMEMNON

Agamemnon ?—Hark again !
Murder ! murder ! murder ! murder !
Help within there ! Help without there !
Break the doors in !—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

(*Appearing from within, where lies AGAMEMNON
dead.*)¹

Spare your pain.
Look ! I who but just now before you all
Boasted of loyal wedlock unashamed,
Now unashamed dare boast the contrary.
Why, how else should one compass the defeat
Of him who underhand contrives one's own,
Unless by such a snare of circumstance
As, once enmesh'd, he never should break through ?
The blow now struck was not the random blow
Of sudden passion, but with slow device
Prepared, and levell'd with the hand of time.
I say it who devised it ; I who did ;
And now stand here to face the consequence.
Ay, in a deadlier web than of that loom
In whose blood-purple he divined a doom,
And fear'd to walk upon, but walk'd at last,
Entangling him inextricably fast,
I smote him, and he bellow'd ; and again
I smote, and with a groan his knees gave way ;
And, as he fell before me, with a third

¹ Hermann says, 'Tractis tabulatis'—the scene *drawing*—'conspicitur Clytemnestra in conclavi stans ad corpus Agamemnonis.'

AGAMEMNON

And last libation from the deadly mace
I pledged the crowning draught to Hades due,
That subterranean Saviour—of the Dead !¹
At which he spouted up the Ghost in such
A burst of purple as, bespatter'd with,
No less did I rejoice than the green ear
Rejoices in the largess of the skies
That fleeting Iris follows as it flies.

CHORUS.

Oh woman, woman, woman !
By what accursèd root or weed
Of Earth, or Sea, or Hell, inflamed,
Darest stand before us unashamed
And, daring do, dare glory in the deed !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Oh, I that dream'd the fall of Troy, as you
Belike of Troy's destroyer. Dream or not,
Here lies your King—my Husband—Aga-
memnon,
Slain by this right hand's righteous handicraft.
Like you, or like it not, alike to me ;
To me alike whether or not you share
In making due libation over this
Great Sacrifice—if ever due, from him
Who, having charged so deep a bowl of blood,
Himself is forced to drink it to the dregs.

¹ At certain Ceremonies, the Third and crowning Libation was to *Zeus Sotër* ; and thus ironically to Pluto.

AGAMEMNON

CHORUS.

Woman, what blood but that of Troy, which Zeus
Foredoom'd for expiation by his hand
For whom the penalty was pledged ? And now,
Over his murder'd body, Thou
Talk of libation !—Thou ! Thou ! Thou !
But mark ! Not thine of sacred wine
Over his head, but ours on thine
Of curse, and groan, and torn-up stone,
To slay or storm thee from the gate,
The City's curse, the People's hate,
Execrate, exterminate—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, ay, to me how lightly you adjudge
Exile or death, and never had a word
Of counter-condemnation for Him there ;
Who, when the field throve with the proper flock
For Sacrifice, forsooth let be the beast,
And with his own hand his own innocent
Blood, and the darling passion of my womb—
Her slew—to lull a peevish wind of Thrace.
And him who cursed the city with that crime
You hail with acclamation ; but on me,
Who only do the work you should have done,
You turn the axe of condemnation. Well ;
Threaten you me, I take the challenge up ;
Here stand we face to face ; win Thou the game,

AGAMEMNON

And take the stake you aim at ; but if I—
Then, by the Godhead that for me decides,
Another lesson you shall learn, though late.

CHORUS.

Man-mettled evermore, and now
Manslaughter-madden'd ! Shameless brow !
But do you think us deaf and blind
Not to know, and long ago,
What Passion under all the prate
Of holy justice made thee hate
Where Love was due, and love where—

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Nay, then, hear !
By this dead Husband, and the reconciled
Avenging Fury of my slaughter'd child,
I swear I will not reign the slave of fear
While he that holds me, as I hold him, dear,
Kindles his fire upon this hearth : my fast
Shield for the time to come, as of the past.
Yonder lies he that in the honey'd arms
Of his Chryseides under Troy walls
Dishonour'd mine : and this last laurell'd wench,
Prophetic messmate of the rower's bench,
Thus far in triumph his, with him along
Shall go, together chaunting one death-song
To Hades—fitting garnish for the feast
Which Fate's avenging hand through mine hath
dress'd.

AGAMEMNON

CHORUS.

Woe, woe, woe, woe !
That death as sudden as the blow
That laid Thee low would me lay low
Where low thou liest, my sovereign Lord !
Who ten years long to Trojan sword
Devoted, and to storm aboard,
In one ill woman's cause accurst,
Liest slain before thy palace door
By one accursedest and worst !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Call not on Death, old man, that, call'd or no,
Comes quick ; nor spend your ebbing breath
on me,
Nor Helena : who but as arrows be
Shot by the hidden hand behind the bow.

CHORUS.

Alas, alas ! The Curse I know
That round the House of Atreus clings,
About the roof, about the walls,
Shrouds it with his sable wings ;
And still as each new victim falls,
And gorged with kingly gore,
Down on the bleeding carcase flings,
And croaks for ' More, more, more ! '

AGAMEMNON

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ay, now, indeed, you harp on likelier strings.
Not I, nor Helen, but that terrible
Alastor of old Tantalus in Hell ;
Who, one sole actor in the scene begun
By him, and carried down from sire to son,
The mask of Victim and Avenger shifts ;
And, for a last catastrophe, that grim
Guest of the abominable banquet lifts
His head from Hell, and in my person cries
For one full-grown sufficient sacrifice,
Requital of the feast prepared for him
Of his own flesh and blood—And there it lies.

CHORUS.

Oh, Agamemnon ! Oh, my Lord !
Who, after ten years toil'd ;
After barbarian lance and sword
Encounter'd, fought, and foil'd :
Returning with the just award
Of Glory, thus inglorious by
Thine own domestic Altar die,
Fast in the spider meshes coil'd
Of Treason most abhorr'd !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

And by what retribution more complete,
Than, having in the meshes of deceit
Enticed my child, and slain her like a fawn

AGAMEMNON

Upon the altar ; to that altar drawn
Himself, like an unconscious beast, full-fed
With Conquest, and the garland on his head,
Is slain ? and now, gone down among the Ghost,
Of taken Troy indeed may make the most,
But not *one* unrequited murder boast.

CHORUS.

Oh Agamemnon, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead !
What hand, what pious hand shall wash the
wound
Through which the sacred spirit ebb'd and fled !
With reverend care compose, and to the ground
Commit the mangled form of Majesty,
And pour the due libation o'er the mound !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

This hand, that struck the guilty life away,
The guiltless carcase in the dust shall lay
With due solemnities : and if with no
Mock tears, or howling counterfeit of woe,
On this side earth ; perhaps the innocent thing,
Whom with paternal love he sent before,
Meeting him by the melancholy shore,
Her arms about him with a kiss shall fling,
And lead him to his shadowy throne below.

CHORUS.

Alas ! alas ! the fatal rent
Which through the house of Atreus went,

AGAMEMNON

Gapes again ; a purple rain
Sweats the marble floor, and falls
From the tottering roof and walls,
The Dæmon heaving under ; gone
The master-prop they rested on :
And the storm once more awake
Of Nemesis ; of Nemesis
Whose fury who shall slake !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Ev'n I ; who by this last grand victim hope
The Pyramid of Vengeance so to cope,
That—and methinks I hear him in the deep
Beneath us growling tow'rd his rest—the stern
Alastor to some other roof may turn,
Leaving us here at last in peace to keep
What of life's harvest yet remains to reap.

CHORUS.

Thou to talk of reaping Peace
Who sowest Murder ! Woman, cease !
And, despite that iron face—
Iron as the bloody mace
Thou bearest—boasting as if Vengeance
Centred in that hand alone ;
Know that, Fury pledged to Fury,
Vengeance owes himself the debts
He makes, and while he serves thee, whets
His knife upon another stone,

AGAMEMNON

Against thyself, and him with thee
Colleguing, as you boast to be,
The tools of Fate. But Fate is Zeus ;
Zeus—who for a while permitting
Sin to prosper in his name,
Shall vindicate his own abuse ;
And having brought his secret thought
To light, shall break and fling to shame
The baser tools with which he wrought.

ÆGISTHUS : CLYTEMNESTRA : CHORUS.

All hail, thou daybreak of my just revenge !
In which, as waking from injurious sleep,
Methinks I recognize the Gods enthroned
In the bright conclave of eternal Justice,
Revindicate the wrongs of man to man !
For see *this* man—so dear to me now dead—
Caught in the very meshes of the snare
By which his father Atreus netted mine.
For that same Atreus surely, was it not ?
Who, wrought by false Suspicion to fix'd Hate,¹
From Argos out his younger brother drove,
My sire—Thyestes—drove him like a wolf,
Keeping his cubs—save one—to better purpose.
For when at last the home-heartbroken man
Crept humbly back again, craving no more
Of his own country than to breathe its air

¹ Or,

Who, first suspecting falsely, and anon
Detesting him his false Suspicion wrong'd, etc.

AGAMEMNON

In liberty, and of her fruits as much
As not to starve withal—the savage King,
With damnable alacrity of hate,
And reconciliation of revenge,
Bade him, all smiles, to supper—such a supper,
Where the prime dainty was—my brother's flesh,
So maim'd and clipt of human likelihood,
That the unsuspecting Father, light of heart,
And quick of appetite, at once fell to,
And ate—ate—what, with savage irony
As soon as eaten, told—the wretched man
Disgorging with a shriek, down to the ground
The table with its curst utensil dash'd,
And, grinding into pieces with his heel,
Cried, loud enough for Heav'n and Hell to hear,
'Thus perish all the race of Pleisthenes !'
And now behold ! the son of that same Atreus
By me the son of that Thyestes slain
Whom the kind brother, sparing from the cook,
Had with his victim pack'd to banishment ;
Where Nemesis—(so sinners from some nook,
Whence least they think assailable, assail'd)—
Rear'd me from infancy till fully grown,
To claim in full my father's bloody due.
Ay, I it was—none other—far away
Who spun the thread, which gathering day by day
Mesh after mesh, inch upon inch, at last
Reach'd him, and wound about him, as he lay,
And in the supper of his smoking Troy
Devour'd his own destruction—scarce condign
Return for that his Father forced on mine.

AGAMEMNON

CHORUS.

Ægisthus, only things of baser breed
Insult the fallen ; fall'n too, as you boast,
By one who plann'd but dared not do the deed.
This is your hour of triumph. But take heed ;
The blood of Atreus is not all outrun
With this slain King, but flowing in a son,
Who saved by such an exile as your own
For such a counter-retribution—

ÆGISTHUS.

Oh,
You then, the nether benchers of the realm,
Dare open tongue on those who rule the helm?
Take heed yourselves ; for, old and dull of wit,
And harden'd as your mouth against the bit,
Be wise in time ; kick not against the spurs ;
Remembering Princes are shrewd taskmasters.

CHORUS.

Beware thyself, bewaring me ;
Remembering that, too sharply stirr'd,
The spurrier need beware the spurr'd ;
As thou of me ; whose single word
Shall rouse the City—yea, the very
Stones you walk upon, in thunder
Gathering o'er your head, to bury
Thee and thine Adultrous under !

AGAMEMNON

ÆGISTHUS.

Raven, that with croaking jaws
Unorphean, undivine,
After you no City draws ;
And if any vengeance, mine
Upon your wither'd shoulders—

CHORUS.

Thine !
Who daring not to strike the blow
Thy worse than woman-craft design'd,
To worse than woman—

ÆGISTHUS.

Soldiers, ho !

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Softly, good Ægisthus, softly ; let the sword that
has so deep
Drunk of righteous Retribution now within the
scabbard sleep !
And if Nemesis be sated with the blood already
spilt,
Even so let us, nor carry lawful Justice into Guilt.
Sheathe your sword ; dismiss your spears ; and
you, Old men, your howling cease,
And, ere ill blood come to running, each unto
his home in peace,

AGAMEMNON

Recognizing what is done for done indeed, as
done it is,
And husbanding your scanty breath to pray that
nothing more amiss.
Farewell. Meanwhile, you and I, Ægisthus,
shall deliberate,
When the storm is blowing under, how to settle
House and State.

THE
DOWNFALL AND DEATH
OF
KING ÆDIPUS

A Drama in Two Parts

CHIEFLY TAKEN FROM THE
ÆDIPUS TYRANNUS AND COLONEUS OF
SOPHOCLES.

To Charles Eliot Norton.

MY DEAR NORTON,

Some while ago you asked me to complete a version of the *Œdipus Tyrannus* and *Coloneus* of Sophocles, which had been lying by me some years. Here they are at last, the two Tragedies united into one Drama under the ponderous alliteration which figures on the Title-page ; for which, however, I could hit on no so comprehensive a substitute. If you can, pray do so. There also, you see that my Drama professes to be neither a Translation, nor a Paraphrase of Sophocles, but “chiefly taken” from him : I need scarcely add, only intended for those who do not read the Greek. As you, however, to whom I send it, are a Scholar, who not only knows, but reveres the original, I shall try to excuse some of the liberties which I have taken with it. For my very free treatment of what I have retained you are already sufficiently prepared ; not so, perhaps, for the much I have omitted : still less for one audacious substitution of my own work for that of Sophocles in what I may call the Second Act in the Second Part of my Play.

PREFATORY LETTER

Well, then, to begin with the more venial sins of omission. You will see that I have dispensed with all (including what I believe is called the *Kommos*) which follows the narration of the catastrophe as related by the several witnesses ; as I think is the case in some of the Tragedies of Euripides. What Professor Paley says of the *Kommos* which terminates the *Persæ* of Æschylus must, I think, be true of all : that, whatever effect the vehement recitation might add to it, the Dialogue is secondary to the Spectacle—by which I understand him to mean those outward signs of woe which are implied in the name. Even as I venture to believe—proh Scholasticus !—that in most of the Lyric Chorus (unless in the case of Æschylus) the words are secondary to the Lyre : are ; in fact, a kind of better *Libretto* for the Music.

However this may be with Ode or *Kommos*, I think no English reader will care to have the horror of the catastrophe in the first Play increased, even to his Mind's eye, by the exhibition of the poor self-blinded King staggering into the public street, whither his two daughters have been summoned to weep, and be wept over by him. In the original, you know, the spectacle he presents is much more revolting—a spectacle indeed of royal degradation surely worse than any which Aristophanes satirised in Euripides. And is not the catastrophe when told of as being accomplished within doors, more terrible, though

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less horrible, than when exhibited without ? And, on the other hand, does not a reader find the impression left on him by the grand catastrophe of the Coloneus dissipated rather than enhanced by the Lamentations which follow, and conclude the Tragedy ?

Thus far I do not think you will much differ from me : but what will you say to the disappearance of two principal Characters from the *Dramatis Personæ*—that of Creon from the first Play, and that of Ismene from the second ? *Œdipus*, you know, has involved Creon in the same groundless charge of Treason which he brings against *Teiresias* ; and, after much and violent altercation with the Prophet, turns with yet more vindictive fury upon the Prince, who comes to vindicate himself from the charge. From all which little results except to show that the Creon of this Play (the Tyrannus) proves himself by his temperate self-defence, and subsequent forbearance toward his accuser, very unlike the Creon of the two after Tragedies, which Goethe thought should be regarded as parts of a connected Trilogv—a theory which is not favoured either by this dissimilarity of character in the several Tragedies, or by the dates usually assigned to the composition of each ; the *Antigone* being reputed as among the earlier, and the *Coloneus*, as tradition tells, the very last of all the Poet's works.

As for Ismene—her cautious refusal to help

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in burying her revolted brother may not be inconsistent with her singular exploit of riding alone to Athens to acquaint her banished father with what is plotting against him in Thebes. But her arrival brings with it more of paternal and filial effusion than comes within the compass of my Play. So I pretend that some loyal Theban—she, if you please, on her Sicilian filly—had told all that was to be told previously to the opening of the Play : and thus Ismene ‘disappears from my Playbill’ altogether. And Œdipus seems to me to present us a no less pathetic figure when accompanied only by the one daughter who is traditionally associated with him as the type of filial, as afterward of sisterly, devotion.

The disappearance of the two sisters along with that Kommos from the first Play helps to connect it with the second in point of Time, without, I think, diminishing the interest of either. In the Tyrannus, you know, Œdipus appears as a man little, if at all, beyond the prime of life. He came quite young, he tells us, to Thebes ; his unlucky marriage, by which the State thought to confirm his other claims to the throne, would, for the same reasons, be not long delayed ; those two daughters of his are scarce in their teens—certainly not marriageable—when brought in to him just before his expulsion ; which, as the life of Thebes depended on it, must have followed immediately on his conviction.

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Creon, at any rate, must have been, by his ill-starr'd relation with Œdipus, considerably the older of the two ; and he, we see, is capable of very active service both in the Coloneus and Antigone. And certainly if Œdipus became an old man between the time of his leaving Thebes, and that of his arrival at Athens, Antigone, who figures along with him in both the original Tragedies, may, on her subsequent return to Thebes, have been a suitable bride in point of years to Creon's son Hæmon, but scarcely such as he would have been so much enamoured of as to sacrifice himself at her side.

Nevertheless, in the original Coloneus, Œdipus has become an old—I think, a very old man. Our own Theatre—our own Shakespeare—has ‘jumped the life’ of his people over as wide an interval in the compass of a single Play as Sophocles has done in two several Tragedies : but, especially if considering them as parts of a Trilogy, one cannot help asking one's self *where*, in all the little world of Greece, Œdipus could have found Space to wander in all the Time.

Perhaps, however, so ran the Legend ; or Sophocles considered that, as usual, I think, in ancient Tragedy—the ‘Pity of it’ was increased by adding the weight of old age to blindness and calamity. I do not question that : but is it so with the grandeur of his præternatural ‘taking off,’ if determined to a time of life when death in some way or other is inevitable ?

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So much for omission. And now for my capital act of treason committed against Sophocles, amounting to nothing less than the re-casting of the whole Second Act (as I call it) of the Coloneus, including Creon's bootless expedition to Athens.

I never understood, though I doubt not the Athenian audience approved, that coming of his with a considerable force (as in the original he does) unprevented—uninterrupted, and apparently unobserved, under the very walls of their City, and seizing on those who were taking refuge there. Insomuch that, when King Theseus, alarmed by the outcries of the Chorus, comes to the rescue, Antigone and Ismene have already been forced away by some of Creon's people, and Œdipus only just escapes being carried off by Creon himself.

In re-casting all this, I hope that whatever wrong I may have done Sophocles, King Theseus, at any rate, has not suffered indignity at my hands, if Creon be made to regard him of sufficient account as to apprise him before advancing to his walls; *not* with the rash design of seizing and carrying off those who are under his protection; but to prevail on them, if he can, by fair argument, to return to Thebes: Theseus standing between the two parties to hear, if not to judge, what has to be said on either side.

And on that score also I have something to say. Up to this visit of Creon's, I could never see any just ground for the rancorous hate which

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Œdipus entertains and exhibits toward Creon or toward his own sons, which occupies so much of the Coloneus with imprecations, that remind one of Lear's against his daughters, but without as much reason, and therefore without engaging our sympathy in his behalf. For how stands the case? Phœbus had announced that, until the murder of King Laius were avenged, Thebes would not rid herself of the Plague that was devouring her: Œdipus denounces Excommunication on the Criminal; convicts himself¹; and, after putting out his own eyes, calls aloud for Thebes to execute the sentence he had called down upon himself, whether by banishment or death. Creon, however, who is now left in charge of the City, decides, with the concurrence of Œdipus' two sons, that banishment will be sufficient accomplishment of the Oracle; and Œdipus is accordingly banished. He soon indeed repents of his rash self-denunciation, and prays to be restored to Thebes: but how could that be until the God, by Oracle or Augury, should sanction his return, without danger of bringing back the Plague which he took away with him?

And when the Oracle at last declares that

¹ For, so far as I see, the sole surviving witness of the deed whom he has ultimately—(not immediately, as would Justice Shallow)—sent for to decide the question, had not yet arrived; or, being, as the Chorus surmises, the same who convicts Œdipus of his fatal parentage, is not interrogated at all as to his Father's murder.

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Thebes can only secure herself from her enemies by repossessing herself of her old King, it is on the strange condition that she is to keep her treasure, whether alive or dead, upon neighbouring territory, for the very reason that he is polluted by his father's blood. Not a satisfactory arrangement for him, whatever it might be for Thebes. But for this, and for all thus far, the Gods were responsible, not Creon and the sons upon whom he fulminates his wrath.

But when Creon appears, and afterward Poly-*nices*, to persuade, if not to force him *home*, he being apprised of their ulterior intentions regarding him, we do not wonder at his blazing up against their selfish duplicity. But still it is, I think, their previous ill-usage (as he thinks it), rather than their present design upon him, which mainly supplies the fuel of his wrath.

Now, had his first expulsion been aggravated by unnecessary cruelty and insult on their part ; and had they persisted in keeping him out when the Gods, under some favourable auspices, might have been supposed to license his return to Thebes, polluted as he might still be with the blood which had not prevented his reigning there for so many years before : I think he would have been furnished with such reason for his Fury as would have carried our feelings along with him. And, whatever ancient Legend or Mythology might say, neither of them was very impracticable, had the Poet chosen to deal

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with them as I have ventured on doing with him.

While doing, as well as saying all this, I am sure you will understand that I am not pretending to improve on Sophocles, whether as a Poet or a Dramatist. As for Poetry, I pretend to very little more than representing the old Greek in sufficiently readable English verse : and whatever I have omitted, added, or altered, has been with a view to the English reader of To-day, without questioning what was fittest for an Athenian theatre more than two thousand years ago. Those great ancient Tragedians were not, any more than their audiences, nice about such consistencies and probabilities as any modern playwright would provide for, and, so far, be the better for it.

One modification of the original not even the English Scholar—I do not mean, Scholastic—would resent ; namely, leaving the terrible story to develope itself no further than needs it must to be intelligible, without being descanted, dwelt, and dilated on, after the fashion of Greek Tragedy.

As I thought I should do no better with the Choruses than old Potter, I have left them, as you see, in his hands, though worthy of a better Interpreter than either of us ; all of them, I say, excepting the two fragments which might otherwise be imputed to him : one at page 388 of the First Part during which Iocasta is supposed to be making her oblations at the altar before the

PREFATORY LETTER

Corinthian Herald interrupts her : secondly, at page 455 of the Second Part, by way of giving Theseus a little while before he enters on the scene to which he has been so hastily summoned : and, lastly, the little Choral morality which ends each play. You say that good literal Prose translation would be better than Potter. So think I too in some respects ; but with Potter the Lyric *Form*, so essential to the conception of Greek Tragedy, is retained, if nothing else : though some grand piece of appropriate organ music would answer the purpose much better.

What I meant for a written letter has grown to such a length—and long-windedness, I fear—that it shall even go to the printer along with the play which it prates about, and, at any rate, give you no trouble in deciphering. Pray mark down what you see amiss in both : and believe me yours, as ever, sincerely,

LITTLEGRANGE.

[FEBRUARY, 1880.]

PART I

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ŒDIPUS	<i>King of Thebes.</i>
IOCASTA	<i>his Queen.</i>
CREON	<i>her brother.</i>
TEIRESIAS	<i>Prophet of Apollo.</i>
PRIEST.		
HERALD FROM CORINTH.		
SHEPHERD OF KING LAIUS.		
CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS.		

The Scene is at THEBES, before the Palace of KING ŒDIPUS.

THE DOWNFALL AND DEATH OF KING ŒDIPUS

ŒDIPUS, PRIEST AND SUPPLIANTS *assembled before
his palace-gate*, CHORUS.

Œd. Children of Cadmus, and as mine to me,
When all that of the plague-struck city can
With lamentation loud, and sacrifice
Beset the shrines and altars of the Gods
Through street and market, by the Temples
twain
Of Pallas, and before the Tomb that shrouds
Ismenus' his prophetic ashes—why
Be you thus gather'd at my palace-door,
Mute, with the Suppliant's olive-branch in hand?
Asking, or deprecating, what? which I,
Not satisfied from other lips to learn,
Myself am come to hear it from your own.
You, whose grave aspect and investiture
Announce the chosen oracle of all,
Tell me the purport: I am here, you see,
As King, and Father of his people too,
To listen and what in me lies to do;

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

For surely mine were but a heart of stone
Not to be moved by such an embassy,
Nor feel my people's sorrows as my own.

Priest. O Œdipus, our Father, and our King!
Of what a mingled company you see
This Supplication gather'd at your door;
Ev'n from the child who scarce has learn'd to
 creep,
Down to old age that little further can,
With all the strength of life that breathes
 between.

You know how all the shatter'd city lies
Reeling a-wreck, and cannot right herself
Under the tempest of this pestilence,
That nips the fruitful growth within the bud,
Strangles the struggling blossom in the womb,
With sudden death infects the living man,
Until the realm of Cadmus wastes, and Thebes
With her depopulation Hades feeds.
Therefore, myself and this mute company
In supplication at your altar sit,
Looking to you for succour; looking not
As to a God, but to the Man of men,
Most like the God in man's extremity:
Who, coming here a stranger to the land,
Didst overcome the Witch who with her song
Seduced, and slew the wisest and the best;
For which all but divine deliverance Thebes
Call'd the strange man who saved her to the
 throne
Left void by her hereditary king.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

And now the kingdom looks to you once more—
To you, the Master of the master-mind,
To save her in a worse extremity :
When men, not one by one, but troop by troop,
Fall by a plague more deadly than the Sphinx,
Till Thebes herself is left to foreign arms
Assailable—for what are wall and tower,
Divinely built and founded as they be,
Without the rampart of the man within ?—
And let not what of Cadmus yet survives
From this time forth regard you as the man
Who saved them once, by worse to perish now.

Œd. Alas, my children ! telling me of that
My people groans with, knowing not yourselves
How more than any man among you, I,
Who bear the accumulated woes of all ;
So that you find me, coming when you may,
Restlessly all day pacing up and down,
Tossing all night upon a sleepless bed,
Endeavouring all that of myself I can,
And all of Heaven implore—thus far in vain.
But if your King have seem'd to pause awhile,
'Tis that I wait the issue of one hope,
Which, if accomplish'd, will accomplish all.
Creon, my brother, and my second self
Beside the throne I sit on, to the shrine
Of Delphian Phœbus, man's assured appeal
In all his exigence, I have despatch'd :
And long before you gather'd at my door
Within my soul was fretting, lest To-day
That should have lighted him from Delphi back

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Pass over into night, and bring him not.
But come he must, and will ; and when he
comes,

Do I not all, so far as man may do,
To follow where the God shall point the way,
Denounce me traitor to the State I saved
And to the people who proclaim'd me King.

Cho. Your words are as a breath from Delphi,
King,
Prophetic of itself ; for even now
Fore-running Rumour buzzes in our ear
That he whose coming all await is here.

Œd. And as before the advent of a God,
The moving multitude divides—O Phœbus !
Be but the word he carries back to me
Auspicious as well-timed !

Chorus. And shall no less ;
For look ! the laurel wreath about his brow
Can but announce the herald of Success.

ŒDIPUS, CREON, CHORUS.

Œd. Son of Menœceus ! Brother ! Brother-
king !—
Oh, let impatience for the word you bring
Excuse brief welcome to the messenger !
Be but the word as welcome !—

Cre. As it shall,
Have you your ancient cunning to divine
The darker word in which the God of Light
Enshrines his answer.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Œd. Speak ! for till I hear,
I know not whether most to hope or fear.

Cre. Am I to speak before the people here,
Or to yourself within ?

Œd. Here, before all,
Whose common cause it is.

Cre. To all then thus :
When Delphi reach'd, and at the sacred shrine
Lustration, sacrifice, and offering made,
I put the question I was charged withal,
The Prophetess of the three-footed throne,
Conceiving with the vapour of the God
Which wrapt her, rising from Earth's centre,
round,

At length convulsed to sudden answer broke :

' O SEVEN-GATED CITY, BY THE LYRE

COMPACT, AND PEOPLED FROM A DRAGON SIRE !

THEBES FEEDS THE PLAGUE THAT SLAYS HER
NOURISHING

WITHIN HER WALLS THE SLAYER OF HER KING.'

Œd. The slayer of her King ? What king ?

Cre. None else

I know than Laius, son of Labdacus,
Who occupied the throne before you came ;
That much of Oracle, methinks, is plain.

Œd. A story rises on me from the past.
Laius, the son of Labdacus—of whom
I know indeed, but him I never saw.

Cre. No ; he was slain before you set your
foot
Over the country's threshold.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Œd. Slain ! By whom ?

Cre. That to divine were to interpret all
That Œdipus himself is call'd to answer.
Thus much is all we know,
The King was murder'd by some roving band
Of outlaws, who waylaid him on his road
To that same Delphi, whither he had gone
On some such sacred mission as myself.

Œd. Yet of those roving outlaws, one at least
Yet breathes among us in the heart of Thebes.

Cre. So saith the Oracle.

Œd. In the midst of all
The citizens and subjects of the King
He slew ?

Cre. So saith the Oracle.

Œd. But hold !
The story of this treason—all, you say,
Now known of it, how first made known in
Thebes ?

Cre. By the one man of the King's retinue,
Who having 'scaped the fate which took the rest,
As if the assassin's foot were at his heels,
Half dead with fear, just reach'd the city gates
With breath to tell the story.

Œd. And breathes still
To tell it once again ?

Cre. I know not that :
For having told it, the bewilder'd man,
As fast as hither he had fled, fled hence,
Where, if the assassin's foot not on him then,
His eye, the God declares, were on him now—

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

So fled he to his native field again
Among his flocks and fellow-husbandmen.

Œd. And thus the single witness you let slip,
Whose eye might ev'n have singled out the
man,

As him the man's !—Oh, had I but been by,
I would have driv'n interrogation home,
Would the bewilder'd memory so have sifted
Of each minutest grain of circumstance—
How many, accoutred how, what people like—
Now by the lapse of time and memory,
Beyond recall into oblivion pass'd !
But not to lose what yet of hope there is—
Let him be sent for, sought for, found and
brought.

Cre. Meanwhile, default of him for whom
you send,
Or of uncertain memory when he comes,
Were it not well, if still the God withhold
His revelation of the word we need,
To question it of his Interpreter ?

Œd. Of his Interpreter !

Cre. Of whom so well,
As of Teiresias, the blind Seer of Thebes,
Whose years the God hath in his service counted
Beyond all reach of human memory ?

Œd. So be it. But I marvel yet why Thebes,
Letting the witness slip, then unpursued,
Or undetected, left the criminal,
Whom the King's blood, by whomsoever spilt,
Cried out aloud to be revenged upon.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Cre. What might be done we did. But how
detect

The roving robber, in whatever land,
Of friend or foe alike, outlaw'd of all,
Where ever prey to pounce on on the wing,
Or housed in rock or forest, save to him
Unknown, or inaccessible? Besides,
Thebes soon had other business on her hand.

Œd. Why, what of business to engage her more
Than to revenge the murder of her King?

Cre. None other than the riddle-singing Sphinx
Who, till you came to silence her, held Thebes
From thinking of the dead to save herself.

Œd. And leaving *this* which then you might
have guess'd,
To guess at that which none of you could solve,
You have brought home a riddle on your heads
Inextricable and more fatal far!
But I, who put the riddling Witch to rest,
This fatal riddle will unravel too,
And by swift execution following
The revelation, once more save the realm,
And wipe away the impiety and shame
Of Laius' yet unexpiated death.
For were no expiation to the God,
And to the welfare of this people due,
Were't not a shame thus unrevenged so long
To leave the slaughter of so great a King—
King Laius, the son of Labdacus,
Who from his father Polydore his blood
Direct from Cadmus and Agenor drew?

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Shame to myself, who, sitting on the throne
He sat on, wedded to the very Queen
Who should have borne him children, as to me
She bore them, had not an assassin's hand
Divorced them ere their wedded life bore fruit !
Therefore to this as 'twere my father's cause,
As of my people's—nay, why not my own,
Who in his death am threaten'd by the hand
Of him, whose eye now follows me about ?—
With the Gods' aid do I devote myself.
And hereto let the city's Herald all
Her population summon, from my lips
To hear and help in what I shall devise :
And you, that with bow'd head and olive wand,
Have since the dawn been gather'd at my door,
Beseeching me with piteous silence, rise,
And by their altars supplicate the Gods,
And Phœbus chief of all, that he may turn
His yet half-clouded word into full light,
And with one shaft of his unerring bow
Smite dead the Plague which back into the
dust
Whence Cadmus raised them lays the People low,

CHORUS.

Thou oracle of Jove, what fate
From Pytho's golden shrine
Brings to th' illustrious Theban state
Thy sweet-breathed voice divine ?
My trembling heart what terror rends,
While dread suspense on thee attends,

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

O Delian Pæan, healing pow'r !
Daughter of golden Hope, to me,
Blest voice, what now dost thou decree,
Or in time's future hour ?

Daughter of heav'n's almighty lord,
Immortal Pallas, hear !
And thou, Diana, queen adored,
Whose tutelary care
Protects these walls, this favour'd state,
Amidst the forum 'round whose seat
Sublime encircling pillars stand !
God of the distant-wounding bow,
Apollo, hear ; avert our woe,
And save the sick'ning land !

This realm when former ills oppress,
If your propitious pow'r
In mercy crush'd the baleful pest,
Outrageous to devour ;
In mercy now extend your care,
For all is misery and despair,
And vain the counsels of the wise.
No fruit, no grain to ripeness grows ;
The matron feels untimely throes,
The birth abortive dies.

The Shades, as birds of rapid flight,
In quick succession go,
Quick as the flames that flash through night,
To Pluto's realms below.
Th' unpeopled town beholds the dead
Wide o'er her putrid pavements spread,
Nor graced with tear or obsequy.
The altars round a mournful band,
The wives, the hoary matrons, stand,
And heave the suppliant sigh.

With deep sighs mix'd the hallow'd strain
Bursts fervent to the skies :

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Deign then, O radiant Pallas, deign
In all thy might to rise.
From this fierce pow'r, which raging round
Unarm'd inflicts the fiery wound,
Daughter of Jove, my country save ;
Hence, goddess, hence the fury sweep
To Amphitrite's chambers deep,
Or the rough Euxine wave !

Doth aught the Night from ruin spare ?
The Morning's sickly ray,
Pregnant with death, inflames the air,
And gives disease its prey.
Father of gods, whose matchless force
Wings the red lightning's vengeful course,
With all thy thunders crush this foe !
Potent to aid, Lycéan king,
Thy shafts secure of conquest wing,
And bend thy golden bow !

Thy beams around, Diana, throw,
And pierce this gloom of night,
As on Lycæum's moss-clad brow
Thou pour'st thy silver light !
Thy nymphs, O Theban Bacchus, lead,
The golden mitre round thy head,
Grief-soothing God of wine and joy ;
Wave thy bright torch, and with its flame
This god, to gods an odious name,
This lurid Pest destroy !

ŒDIPUS, CHORUS.

Œd. You came to me for counsel ; hearken
then,
And do as well as hearken, like myself
Following the pointed finger of the God
Which thus far leads us, all may yet be well.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

I, Œdipus, albeit no Theban born,
By Thebes herself enthroned her sovereign King,
Thus to the citizens of Thebes proclaim ;
That whosoever of them knows by whom
King Laius, son of Labdacus, was slain,
Forthwith let him disclose it undismay'd ;
Yea, though the criminal himself he were,
Let not the dread of deadly consequence
Revolt him from confession of the crime ;
For he shall suffer nothing worse than this,
Instant departure from the city, but
Uninjured, uninsulted, unpursued ;
For though feloniously a King he slew
Yet haply as a stranger unaware
That king was Laius ; and thus the crime
Half-clear'd of treason, half absolved by time.
Nor, on the other hand, if any knows
Another guilty, let him not for love,
Or fear, or whatsoever else regard,
Flinch from a revelation that shall win
More from myself than aught he fears to lose—
Nay, as a second saviour of the State
Shall after me be call'd ; and who should not
Save a whole people at the cost of one ?
But *Him*—that one—who would not at the cost
Of self-confession save himself and all—
Him—were he nearest to my heart and hearth—
Nearest and dearest—thus do I denounce ;
That from the very moment that he stands,
By whatsoever, or by whom, reveal'd,
No man shall him bespeak, at home, abroad,

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Sit with at table, nor by altar stand,
But, as the very Pestilence he were
Incarnate which this people now devours,
Him slay at once, or hoot and hunt him forth,
With execration from the city walls.
But if, in spite of promise or of threat,
The man who did, or knows who did, this deed,
Still hold it in his bosom unreveal'd—
That man—and he is here among us now—
Man's vengeance may escape when he forswears
Participation in the crime, but not
The Gods', himself involving in the Curse
Which, with myself and every man in Thebes,
He shall denounce upon the criminal,
The Gods invoking to withhold from him
That issue of the earth by which he lives,
That issue of the womb by which himself
Lives after him ; that in the deadly curse
By which his fellows perish he and his
May perish, or, if worse there be, by worse !

Cho. Beside Apollo's altar standing here,
That oath I swear, that neither I myself
Nor did myself, nor know who did this deed :
And in the curse I join on him who did,
Or, knowing him who did, will not reveal.

Œd. 'Tis well : and, all the city's seven gates
closed,
Thus solemnly shall every man in Thebes
Before the altars of his country swear.

Cho. Well have you done, O Master, in so far
As human hand and wit may reach ; and lo !

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

The sacred Seer of Thebes, Teiresias,
To whom, next to the God himself, we look
For Heaven's assistance, at your summons comes,
In his prophetic raiment, staff in hand,
Approaching, gravely guided as his wont,
But with a step, methinks, unwonted slow.

ŒDIPUS, TEIRESIAS, CHORUS.

Teiresias, Minister and Seer of God,
Who, blind to all that others see without,
See that within to which all else are blind ;
Sequester'd as you are with Deity,
You know, what others only know too well,
The mortal sickness that confounds us all ;
But you alone can tell the remedy.
For since the God whose Minister you are
Bids us, if Thebes would be herself again,
Revenge the murder of King Laius
By retribution on the murderer,
Who undetected walks among us now ;
Unless by you, Teiresias, to whose lips,
As Phœbus his Interpreter we cling,
To catch the single word that he withholds,
And without which what he reveals is vain—
Therefore to you, Teiresias, you alone,
Do look this people and their Ruler—look,
Imploring you, by that same inward light
Which sees, to name the man who lurks un-
seen,
And whose live presence is the death of all.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Tei. Alas ! how worse than vain to be well
arm'd

When the man's weapon turns upon himself !

Œd. I know not upon whom that arrow
lights.

Tei. If not on him that summon'd, then on
him

Who, summon'd, came. There is one remedy ;
Let those who hither led me lead me hence.

Œd. Before the single word—which you
alone

Can speak—be spoken ? How is this, Teiresias,
That to your King on such a summons come,
You come so much distemper'd ?

Tei. For the King,
With all his wisdom, knows not what he asks.

Œd. And therefore asks that he may know
from you,
Seeing the God hath folded up his word
From human eyesight.

Tei. Why should I reveal
What He I serve has chosen to conceal ?

Œd. Is't not your office to interpret that
To man which he for man vouchsafes from
Heaven ?

Tei. What Fate hath fix'd to come to pass
come will,
Whether reveal'd or not.

Œd. I know it must ;
But Fate may cancel Fate, foretelling that
Which, unpredicted, else would come to pass.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Tei. Yet none the less I tell you, Œdipus,
That you, though wise, not knowing what you
ask,

I, knowing, shall not answer.

Œd. You will not !

Inexorable to the people's cries—

Plague-pitiless, disloyal to your King—

Tei. Oh ! you forsooth were taunting me but
now

With *my* distemper'd humour—

Œd. Who would not,

When but a word, which you pretend to know,
Would save a people ?

Tei. One of them at least

It would not.

Œd. Oh, scarce any man, methinks,
But would himself, though guiltless, sacrifice,
If that would ransom all.

Tei. Yet one, you see,
Obdurate as myself—

Œd. You have not heard, perchance, Teiresias,
(Unless from that prophetic voice within,)
How through the city, by my herald's voice,
With excommunication, death, or banishment,
I have denounced, not him alone who did,
But him who, knowing who, will not reveal ?

Tei. I hear it now.

Œd. And are inflexible
To Fear as Pity ?

Tei. It might be, to Fear
Inflexible *by* Pity ; else, why fear

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Invulnerable as I am in Truth,
And by the God I serve inviolate ?

Œd. Is not your King a Minister of Zeus,
As you of Phæbus, and the King of Thebes
Not more to be insulted or defied
Than any Priest or Augur in his realm ?

Tei. Implore, denounce, and threaten as you
may,

What unreveal'd I would, I will not say.

Œd. You will not ! Mark then how, default
of your

Interpretation, I interpret you :

Either not knowing what you feign to know,
You lock your tongue in baffled ignorance ;
Or, knowing that which you will not reveal,
I do suspect—Suspect ! why, stand you not
Self-accused, self-convicted, and by me
Denounced as he, that knowing him who did,
Will not reveal—nay, might yourself have done
The deed that you with some accomplice plann'd,
Could those blind eyes have aim'd the murderous
hand ?

Tei. You say so ! Now then, listen in your
turn

To that one word which, as it leaves my lips,
By your own Curse upon the Criminal
Denounced, should be your last in Thebes to
hear.

For by the unerring insight of the God
You question, Zeus his delegate though you be
Who lay this Theban people under curse

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Of revelation of the murderer
Whose undiscover'd presence eats away
The people's life—I tell you—You are he !

Cho. Forbear, old man, forbear ! And you,
my King,
Heed not the passion of provoked old age.

Œd. And thus, in your blind passion of
revenge,
You think to 'scape contempt or punishment
By tossing accusation back on me
Under Apollo's mantle.

Tei. Ay, and more,
Dared you but listen.

Cho. Peace, O peace, old man !

Œd. Nay, let him shoot his poison'd arrows
out ;
They fall far short of me.

Tei. Not mine, but those
Which Fate had fill'd my Master's quiver with,
And you have drawn upon yourself.

Œd. Your Master's ?
Your Master's ; but assuredly not His
To whom you point, albeit you see him not,
In his meridian dazzling overhead,
Who is the God of Truth as well as Light,
And knows as I within myself must know
If Memory be not false as Augury,
The words you put into his lips a Lie !
Not He, but Self—Self only—in revenge
Of self-convicted ignorance—Self alone,
Or with some self whom Self would profit by—

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

As were it—Creon, say—smooth, subtle Creon,
Moving by rule and weighing every word
As in the scales of Justice—but of whom
Whispers of late have reach'd me—Creon, ha !
Methinks I scent another Master here !
Who, wearied of but secondary power
Under an alien King, and would belike
Exalt his Prophet for good service done
Higher than ever by my throne he stood—
And, now I think on't, bade me send for you
Under the mask of Phœbus—

Cho.

Oh, forbear—

Forbear, in turn, my lord and master !

Tei.

Nay,

Let him, in turn, his poison'd arrows, *not*
From Phœbus' quiver, shoot, but to recoil
When his mad Passion having pass'd—

Œd.

O vain

Prerogative of human majesty,
That one poor mortal from his fellows takes,
And, with false pomp and honour dressing up,
Lifts idol-like to what men call a Throne,
For all below to worship and assail !
That even the power which unsolicited
By aught but salutary service done
The men of Thebes committed to my hands,
Some, restless under just authority,
Or jealous of not wielding it themselves,
Ev'n with the altar and the priest collude,
And tamper with, to ruin or to seize !
Prophet and Seer forsooth and Soothsayer !

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Why, when the singing Witch contrived the
noose

Which strangled all who tried and none could
loose,

Where was the Prophet of Apollo then ?

'Twas not for one who poring purblind down

Over the reeking entrail of the beast,

Nor gaping to the wandering bird in air,

Nor in the empty silence of his soul

Feigning a voice of God inaudible,

Not he, nor any of his tribe—but I—

I, Œdipus, a stranger in the land,

And uninspired by all but mother-wit,

Silenced and slew the monster against whom

Divine and human cunning strove in vain.

And now again when tried, and foil'd again,

This Prophet—whether to revenge the past,

And to prevent discomfiture to come,

Or by some traitor aiming at my throne

Suborn'd to stand a greater at his side

Than peradventure e'er he stood at mine,

Would drag me to destruction ! But beware !

Beware lest, blind and agèd as you are,

Wrapt in supposititious sanctity,

You, and whoever he that leagues with you,

Meet a worse doom than you for me prepare.

Tei. Quick to your vengeance, then ; for this
same day

That under Phœbus' fiery rein flies fast

Over the field of heaven, shall be the last

That you shall play the tyrant in.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Œd. O Thebes,
You never called me Tyrant, from the day
Since first I saved you !

Tei. And shall save again ;
As then by coming, by departing now.
Enough : before the day that judges both
Decide between us, let them lead me home.

Œd. Ay, lead him hence—home—Hades—
anywhere !
Blind in his inward as his outward eye.

Tei. Poor man ! that in your inward vision
blind,
Know not, as I, that ere this day go down,
By your own hand yourself shall be consign'd
To deeper night than now you taunt me
with ;

When, not the King and Prophet that you
were,

But a detested outcast of the land,
With other eyes and hands you feel your way
To wander through the world, begging the bread
Of execration from the stranger's hand
Denied you here, and thrust from door to door,
As though yourself the Plague you brought from
Thebes ;

A wretch, self-branded with the double curse
Of such unheard, unnatural infamy,
As shall confound a son in the embrace
Of her who bore him to the sire he slew !

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

CHORUS

Strophe 1

All yet is dark. What wretch abhorr'd,
Grasping with blood-stain'd hand his ruthless sword,
From Delphi's high rock-seated shrine
Declares the voice divine
The author of this horrid deed ?
Now let him wing his swiftest speed ;
The son of Jove upon him flies,
Arm'd with the flames and lightnings of the skies :
Dreadful, resistless in their force
The Fates attend his course.

Antistrophe 1

The oracle divinely bright
To drag the latent murderer into light
Shone forth, Parnassus, from thy brow
White with eternal snow :
For, like a bull, to secret shades,
To rocks, to caves, to sylvan glades,
Far from the Pythian prophecies
Mournful the solitary wanderer flies :
In vain : they hover round his head,
And ceaseless terrors spread.

Strophe 2

Dreadful, dreadful things to hear
Utters the prophetic Seer.
Him doth truth, doth falsehood guide ?
Fear and hope my soul divide ;
Painful suspense ! The present and the past
Darkening clouds alike o'ercast.
Was wrong by Laius done of old,
That made the son of Polybus his foe ?
Such in no record is enroll'd ;
Nought at this hour of proof I know,
Decreeing as the Seer decreed,
To charge on Œdipus the secret deed.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Antistrophe 2

Jove, high ruler of the skies,
And the Pythian god are wise ;
They the deeds of mortals know,
All whate'er is done below :
Of knowledge doth the Seer a brighter ray,
Than illumines me, display ?
Some deeper drink of wisdom's spring ;
But proofs, that flash conviction I demand.
The Sphinx display'd her dreadful wing,
His wisdom saved the sinking land ;
Then let my grateful soul disdain
To rank the hero with the murderer's train.

IOCASTA, CHORUS, *then* ŒDIPUS.

Ioc. A noise has reach'd me through the
palace-wall
Of words between Teiresias and the King,
In which my brother's name was all misused.
You who were here, and heard, can tell me all.

Cho. Words there have been indeed on either
side,
By provocation into passion blown,
Which after-thought as likely will disown.

Ioc. But to what purport ?

Cho. I would not repeat
What those who utter'd now may wish unsaid,
Much more, unheard. But look ! the King
himself
To answer for himself.

Ioc. As one who dreams.
In Heaven's name, husband, tell me what has
fired

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

This wrath between you and Teiresias,
So fierce that e'en my brother Creon's name
Was scorcht withal, and in its ashes now
Still smoulders in your face ?

Œd. That has been said
On either side that should not ; but on his,
Relying on protection from his God,
Treason so foul against his King—

Ioc. But what ?

Œd. Why need tell now, if, as the Prophet
says,

This very day shall not go down without
To Thebes, as you, revealing ?—What if I—
If I, that have with banishment or death
Denounced the assassin of King Laius—
Myself am he ?

Ioc. You ! Œdipus ?

Œd. So says
Apollo's prophet.

Ioc. You !—Teiresias !—You !
On what presumption, Human or Divine ?

Œd. On His whose chariot shall not cross
the sky,
But dragging me to Night along with it.

Ioc. Which cannot be—we know, which
cannot be
Of the God's self—you of yourself more sure
Than any mortal Prophet sure of Him.

Œd. So might I think. But if not from the
God,
From whom then, Iocasta ?

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Ioc. Only not
From Creon—Whosoever else, not he !—
My brother, and your brother, being mine !

Œd. Yet brother against brother, son 'gainst
sire,

Such things have been between them, and shall be,
For things of less ambition than a throne.

Ioc. Oh, strangle such suspicion in its birth
Of one more innocent than babe unborn !
Why, had he minded empire, could he not
Have seized it for his own before you came,
And Thebes was looking for a sovereign ?
Or, after-minded to unseat you King,
Would have contrived and hatch'd his priestly
plot

Ere you so firmly seated on the throne,
And life with him at least so much for-spent
As makes ev'n just possession—and much more,
Unjust—of little moment unto all !

Œd. So be it. From the God of Light and
Truth
Less likely than from him of Sleep and Dream,
Whose-ever be the Prophet.

Ioc. Had you not
Provoked the Prophet first ?

Œd. As who would not,
Who either knowing would withhold the word
On which a people's whole salvation hung,
Then, taunted into malice by just wrath,
Or to collusion with some traitor leagued,
Belied his God, and me.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Ioc. The man is old,
And testy, and perhaps incensed by you,
Mere human passion with the lees
Of Divination mixing—

Œd. Be it so ;
And so, methinks, I might have let it pass,
But for a parting threat, which though in wrath
And malice, like the rest it may have been,
Woke up the echo of another Word
Told me by Delphi's self, so long ago
As with its unfulfilment to have died
Almost from memory.

Ioc. What Oracle
Which, if the Prophet fail'd, has fail'd as well ?

Œd. You know I am the son of Polybus,
Of Corinth King, and Merope his Queen,
And till a chance, of which you may not know,
Slight as it seem'd, but fraught with grave result,
Methought the first in Corinth after them.
One day at table, when the cup went round,
One of the company whom I, belike
Flushed with the wine and youthful insolence,
Had twitted with his meaner parentage,
Bade me beware ; for, proudly as I sate
Above them all beside the royal twain
A superstition linger'd, that because
Of some ill-omen'd accident of birth
Their son should never to their throne succeed.
The word awhile sank in the flowing wine,
But when the wine went off the word was there,
And all night long kept stirring in my brain.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

So that, with morning when I woke again,
Unable to endure it unsuppress'd,
I challenged King and Queen to answer me
The challenge thrown out by the nameless guest.
Indignantly they heard ; denounced the man
Whoever it might be, for false or fool,
And with endearing re-assurances
Recomforted me awhile. Nevertheless,
Spite re-assurance and redoubled love,
That random word still rankled in my heart,
And I resolved on quenching all misdoubt
From the head fountain of all truth at Delphi.
Thither, without a word of whither gone,
I went, and put my question. But the God
Vouchsafed no revelation of the past,
But prophesied far worse for me to come ;
That I should slay my father : then with her
Who bore me wed, and bring into the world
A race the world would loathe to look upon.
Whereat affrighted—as what man were not ?—
From Corinth and from those I was to wrong
I fled—I scarce knew whither, so from them—
Fled hither ; and in spite of prophecies,
All that I lost regain'd, except the bliss
Of prospering in a loving mother's eyes.

Ioc. And see ! the father whom you were to slay,
With that Queen-mother whom you were to wed,
Lives to a ripe old age in Corinth, far
Beyond his reach who should have wrong'd them
both,

Himself fast wedded and enthroned in Thebes !

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Œd. And yet this blunted shaft of long ago,
And rusted with oblivion, had the Seer
Snatch'd from his Master's armoury To-day,
For malediction's last and master blow !

Ioc. Which from his Master's hand had fail'd
before !

And would you listen to a woman's voice
I could requite your story, Œdipus,
With one so like as almost to be one,
Save that in mine the Sire it was who foil'd
Predestination, as in yours the Son.

Œd. In this dumb pause between despair and
hope,
Whose voice to me more welcome than your
own ?

Ioc. When first I wedded with King Laius,
Whose murder now perplexes Thebes and you,
A Prophecy from Delphi reached his ears—
But whether from the God, or from his Priest,
I know not—but there went the Prophecy ;
That he should die slain by the hand of him
Who should be born between himself and me.
Whereat, like you, affrighted, when the child
But three days born had seen the light of
day,

He had him, spite of all a mother's cries,
Not slain, but left in some such desert place
As where with cold and hunger, he must die.
So, at the sacrifice of that poor life
Saving his own, he lived himself in peace,
Till slain, not as the Oracle foretold

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Slain by the son himself had slain before,
But by that undetected alien hand
Which the fond Prophet pointed at in you.
Of such account are such vaticinations,
Whether from Phœbus, or his Minister ;
Of which take you no heed. For, surely, what
Fate has determined, Fate shall bring to pass,
Whether by prophecy foretold or not.

Œd. So seems it.

Loc. Nay, beyond denial *is*.
And yet you seem to hesitate as one
Who in broad daylight cannot see his way.

Œd. Was it not said that Laius your King
Upon some sacred errand by the road
Was set upon and murder'd ?

Loc. Even so ;
To that same Delphi where yourself had been,
As much to be misled.

Œd. And whereabout ?

Loc. Somewhere in Phocis which his road
went through ;
As went the story.

Œd. And how long ago ?

Loc. Nay, just before you came to Thebes
yourself
To save us from the Sphinx, and occupy
The throne left empty by my husband's death.
What makes you muse ?

Œd. And this King Laius
About what age, and what to look upon ?

Loc. Lofty and large of stature, and of port

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

And aspect that becomes a King ; his hair
Just whitening with the earliest frost of age—

Œd. And how accompanied ?

Ioc. With such a train

Accompanied as may become a King
Upon a peaceful errand of his own,
And through a friendly people travelling.

Œd. And, as the story went, but one of those
Who, witnessing, escaped to tell the tale.

Ioc. Ev'n so it was.

Œd. And him they let depart
With half his tale untold ?

Ioc. Nay, all he could,
Half dead with terror. Meanwhile Œdipus,
What is't that, when I thought to clear your brow
With dissipation of prophetic fear,
Darkens it more and more ?

Œd. Is it not strange—
Strange—that your second husband, like your
first,

With such a cross-related Prophecy
Threaten'd, like him should have defeated it ?

Ioc. Strange as it is, but most assuredly.

Œd. O Iocasta, what if secret Fate
Avenged the God, who sometimes speaks for her,
Two thwarted utterances by one blow
On Laius and myself unpropheied ?

Ioc. I know not what this aims at.

Œd. You shall hear.
When, as I told you, in my youth at Corinth,
I had resolved to cross that Prophecy

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Which from the God's own lips myself had heard,
By flying those I was foredoom'd to wrong—
Nay, from the very country of my birth,
Leaving them all behind me for the stars
Alone to tell me of their whereabouts,
I fled : and flying as at random on,
I came—now mark me, Iocasta, came—
Whether in Phocis, or elsewhere, I know not—
Where two main roads which lead two nations on
To Delphi, shrink into a narrow gorge ;
When, coming up the narrow road, Behold !
A Herald first, and then a chariot,
In which, erect beside his charioteer,
There rode the stately semblance of a King,
And so came on, not swerving left or right,
As if the road were but for them, and I
A cur, to slink aside and let them by.
Whereat, no cur, but a King's son, enraged,
With the stout staff I carried in my hand
I smote the charioteer ; on which the King
Struck me with his—for which he paid too dear
With such a fatal counter-blow from mine
As roll'd him headlong dead into the dust :
And, after him, his Herald, and all his
Who came against me one by one I slew.
Now if the royal man—for such he was—
Were—as by such consent of circumstance
I scarce dare think were not—

Ioc.

Oh, many a King

Of a like presence, and like retinue,
Has been that road to learn the word of Fate

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Which he, like you, had vainly learn'd before.

Œd. But one escaped, they say ; and if he live—

And if maintain the tale that first he told,
That Laius, not by one, but many men,
Was in his chariot set upon and slain,
Then was it surely not King Laius
Whom single-handed, and alone, I slew.
But if he falter from that first report—

Ioc. How should he ?

Œd. Whether out of present fear,
Or after, to excuse a coward flight,
One man to numbers multiply he might—

Ioc. He cannot—whether by device or fear,
He cannot falter from his first report—
Unless the sudden presence of his King,
And the disquiet of your looks affright him
Into the confirmation of false fear.
But meanwhile, Œdipus, come in with me,
And let not troubled Thebes new troubles see
Writ in your brows, augmenting present ill,
And Prophecy that Fate shall not fulfil.

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

Fair Fortune deign with me to dwell,
My soul if holy reverence awes,
By thinking, speaking, acting well,
To bow obedient to the Laws.
From heav'n they draw their lineage high,
And tread with stately step the sky :

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Their father the Olympian king ;
No mixture of man's mortal mould ;
Nor shall Oblivion's sable wing
In shades their active virtues fold.
In them the god is great, nor fears
The withering waste of years.

Antistrophe 1.

The tyrant Pride engenders. Pride
With wealth o'erfill'd, with greatness vain,
Mounting with Outrage at her side,
The splendid summit if she gain,
Falls headlong from the dangerous brow,
Down dash'd to ruin's gulf below.
Not so our monarch : for of old,
His contest glorious to the state,
In her own blood the Fury roll'd :
So may the god now guide his fate !
Still be the god's protection mine,
Strong in his power divine !

Strophe 2.

But should some wretch, contemptuous, bold,
Brave the just gods, his hands with slaughter stain,
The vengeful pow'rs of heav'n disdain,
Nor their pure seats in holy reverence hold,
Him may Perdition sweep away,
And thus his wanton pride repay ;
Him too, whom wild Ambition prompts to seize,
Though Justice cries aloud, forbear.
Can all his vaunts, who dares attempts like these,
Guard his proud heart from guilty fear ?
Such deeds if glory waits, in vain
I lead this choral train.

Antistrophe 2.

No more at Delphi's central cell,
At Abæ, or Olympia's hallow'd shrine,
Attendant pay I rites divine,
Till the god deigns this darkness to dispel.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

O Jove, if thee we rightly call
The sovereign lord, the king of all,
Let not concealment this in shades enfold
From thee, and thy immortal reign !
The oracles, to Laius giv'n of old,
They spurn with insolent disdain,
No more to Phœbus honours pay ;
And things divine decay.

IOCASTA, CHORUS.

Loc. Ancients of Thebes, in this extremity
When ev'n the very steersman of the realm,
To whom we look for our deliverance,
Veering himself with every wind that blows
Of rumour, helplessly resigns the helm,
I come, albeit with these poor woman's hands,
To offer wreath and incense on the shrines
And altars of our tutelary Gods :
And first to thee, Apollo, first to thee,
Whose altar nearest to the palace stands,
And on whose word depends the life of Thebes,
Lest any unconsider'd word against
Thy Minister, revolt thy face from us ;
Imploring thee with all the Gods in Heav'n
To help where all of human help is vain.

CHORUS

Barb'd with Death, there are among
The gold-enquiver'd arrows hung
About Apollo's shoulder ; whence,
As over heav'n his chariot burns

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

The land he loves to harvest turns,
And cities swell with opulence ;
Ev'n so, where yet unexpiated sin
Cries out, or undetected lurks within,
The God his lustre turns to pestilence ;
And contrite man must worship and abide,
Till, Nemesis and Justice satisfied,
When men least dream it, one relenting
ray—
Oh grant, Apollo, grant it as we pray !—
Strikes through sheer midnight, and lets in
the day.

HERALD, IOCASTA, CHORUS.

Her. Tell me who will among you, men of
Thebes,
Which is the palace of King Œdipus,
And, further, if the King himself within.

Cho. This is the palace ; and the King
himself
Within ; and she that by that altar stands
Offering her garland to the God, his Queen.

Her. Oh, to the prayer she offers at the shrine
She lays the wreath on, be the God benign !

Ioc. A Herald ! whence, and on what
embassy ?

Her. From Corinth, as the message that I
bring.

Ioc. Good may the tidings be where all goes
ill.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Her. If, as things human, not unmix'd with pain,
To you and yours auspicious in the main.

Loc. So far so well ; but tell me—

Her. This in sum—
The citizens of Corinth, by my voice,
Proclaim King Œdipus of Thebes their King

Loc. Œdipus King of Corinth ?

Her. Even so.

Loc. But does not Polybus in Corinth reign ?

Her. No ; the long years that kept him on
the Throne,
At length have laid him in his father's tomb.

Loc. The King of Corinth dead ! Polybus
dead !

Summon the King ! You Oracles of Heaven,
Of what account shall men hereafter hold
Your Ministers—or you ? This was the Sire
Whom Œdipus, for fear of slaying, fled,
Now by the common course of Nature dead !

ŒDIPUS, IOCASTA, HERALD, CHORUS.

Œd. What tidings ? Is the man I sent for here ?

Loc. Not he, but one whose coming shall go far
To make his coming needless. Herald, speak.

Her. I come from Corinth, by the people
there

Charged with a mission to King Œdipus,
Whom, in the room of Polybus now dead,
They call upon to fill the sovereign chair.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Œd. My father dead ?

Ioc. And by no hand of yours !

Her. No, nor by any hand but Nature's
own,

That lightly rocks, you know, old age to sleep.

Œd. And this is he whom by the Oracle
From Phœbus his own lips, myself I heard
Foredoom'd to slay—

Yet with whose death I have no more to do
Than leaving him to languish for the son
Whose hand was to have slain him had he
stay'd !

Ioc. Did not I say ?

Œd. But who would not be scared
By such prediction from the God himself—
Of which yet half hangs dark above my head !

Ioc. This word from Corinth is a Signal-fire
Assuring us that Oracle, half slain,
Must all lie buried in your father's tomb.

Œd. The aged King is dead, you tell me,
Herald—
But Merope, his Queen ?

Her. Lives, and may live
As one that hath not reached her winter yet ;
And longer yet to live if you return,
Whose sudden flight from Corinth neither she
Nor Corinth cease to wonder at, and mourn.

Œd. Yet, Herald, she herself it was whose
love,
That would have held me there, thence banish'd
me.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Her. If one, a simple subject as I am,
Might ask of him he now salutes for King—

Œd. A Prophecy of Phœbus, from the lips
Of Phœbus' self, and utter'd in these ears,
Involving me in worse calamity
With Merope, my mother, who survives,
Than by my father's death I have escaped.

Her. I understand not wholly, but thus
much,
That 'twas the fear of some mysterious wrong
Against them both which drove you from their
side
And from your country.

Œd. That, and that alone.

Her. I know not if for better or for worse,
But certainly for strangest, Œdipus,
If now for the first time, and from my lips,
You learn that you are not indeed the son
Of those you fled from in what two-fold fear.

Œd. You seem a loyal as well-season'd man,
As near in age to him you lately served
As trusted, and I think to me and mine
Well-minded now.

Her. If not, I had not told
What told I have.

Œd. And would reiterate?

Her. By the most solemn oath by which
mankind
Adjure the Gods to witness human word.

Œd. That I am not in very deed the son
Of Polybus, and Merope his Queen?

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Her. No more their son than—might I so
dare say—

Than son of mine—and that is, not at all.

Œd. But was this known in Corinth ?

Her. To none else
Save to the King and Queen themselves, and me.

Œd. Yet 'twas in Corinth when the cup went
round

At table, that a guest once startled me
With a light taunt of somewhat like to that
Which now you gravely tell.

Her. The random shot
Of idleness, or malice freed by wine,
That sometimes nears the mark.

Œd. But how was it
That only you beside the King and Queen
Knew for a truth ?

Her. Would Œdipus know all ?

Œd. Yea—on the allegiance you profess to
him,
Whom now you have saluted as your King.

Her. Thus then I know it : for that I alone
Laid you a new-born babe into their hands
Who, childless as they were, and like to be,
Ev'n took what fortune sent them for their own.

Cho. This man bears stranger tidings from
himself

Than from his country he was charged withal.

Œd. You—and you solely—brought me to
their hands—

From whose received me then ?

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Ioc. O Œdipus,
When all, beyond all hope, has ended well,
Why tempt the God, still jealous of success,
By questioning the means ?

Œd. I bid you speak !

Her. You charge me for an answer, Œdipus,
Which, were you not my King who bids me
speak,

Yet might resent when spoken—

Œd. But one word
Of ev'n unwelcome truth from human lip
Were welcome in the night of mystery
That Fate has gather'd round me.

Her. Listen, then.
Long ere in favour of these whitening locks,
And recompence of faithful service done,
King Polybus had made me what I am,
I was his shepherd ; and, upon a time
Keeping my flock upon Kithæron's side,
One of like calling with myself, though not
Of the same country, who that summer through
Had fed his sheep beside me, came one day,
And listening first, and looking all about,
With those rough hands of his he laid in mine
As tenderly as any mother might,
A naked infant—say, some three days born—
And fasten'd foot to foot, like some poor lamb,
Which some one of the land from which he
came,

Warm from the bosom of its mother took
To perish on the barren mountain's side,

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Of cold and hunger. Which the kindly man
Not finding in himself the heart to do,
But yet as fearful if he left undone,
Gave you—for you, King Œdipus, it was—
The very name you bear, remembering
The pitiful condition of the babe—
Gave you to me, to carry far away
And pitifully cherish for my own
Beyond all search of those who wish'd you dead.
So to his country he, and I to mine :
Which when I reach'd, and to my King and
Queen
Show'd them the prettiest lamb of all my flock,
They, whether by some instinct of their own
Inspired, or somewhat royal in the Child
Prophetic of the Man that was to be,
Took, nursed, and rear'd to manhood for their
own,
And set beside themselves upon the throne.

Cho. The Gods upon the mountain-top, men
tell,
Do sometimes light, and through the tangled
dell,
And forest-shade—

Œd. A shepherd like yourself,
But not of Corinth. Whence then ?

Her. Thebes, he said,
To which your destiny recall'd you.

Œd. Thebes !

Ioc. O Œdipus, by all the Gods in heav'n,
And all that upon earth you hold most dear,

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Heed not these stories of the past, patch'd up
By the fallacious memory of old age !

Œd. He were by nature baser than base-born
Who would not find and follow to its source
The current of the blood by which he lives.
This Shepherd—and from whom took he the
child—

Charged with that ruthless errand ?

Her. Either I
With mine own duty busied did not ask,
Or he not answer.

Œd. But to answer lives ?

Her. Those of his country best can answer
that.

Œd. Does any man of all the people here
Remember such a man ?

Cho. May be the same
Already sent for, who, as I remember,
Like this good Herald, shepherded the flocks
Of Laius, then our Master. But the Queen—

Ioc. No more ! No more ! For your sake,
Œdipus,
If not for mine—no more !

Œd. Whatever shame
My birth betray, your blood it cannot taint ;
Not were I proved the issue of a sire
Three generations deep in slavery.

Ioc. Forbear ! once more, for one last time,
forbear !

Œd. If aught you know—and your wild looks
and words

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

But argue somewhat than conjecture worse—
At once reveal it all : for ask I will
Till all be answered.

Ioc. Wretched man ! the last
These lips shall ever utter you have heard !

Cho. She is gone as one distracted. O my
Lord,
What should this sudden passion of the Queen
Forbode of ill !

Œd. Forbode what ill it may,
But I will solve the riddle of my birth.
The Queen belike, of royal birth herself
And haughty-minded as such women are,
Resents her husband's baser parentage ;
But I, regardless of the accident
That oft from royal blood provokes a slave,
I do account myself the royal heir
Of Destiny, who found me where I lay,
By man's blind foresight which defeats itself
Cradled to perish on Kithæron's side,
And taking from a simple shepherd's hand,
So laid me in the lap of Royalty,
And through the days and years of human growth
Rear'd to the kingly stature that I am.
And when, affrighted by vain prophecies,
From Corinth, and the throne prepared me there,
I fled, inalienable Destiny
Pursuing drove me but from throne to throne,
Till, doubling back my course to reach my height,
Now Thebes and Corinth claim me for their
own.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

CHORUS.

Strophe.

If a prophet's soul be mine
Aught illumed with skill divine,
By Olympus' sacred height,
Ere the morning's streaming light,
Thou, Kithæron, shalt unfold
All this mystery round thee roll'd,
And with pride and triumph own
Œdipus thy foster'd son.
Then with joy would we advance,
Leading light the festive dance ;
Teach thy woods with joy to ring,
And with transport hail our king.
Glorious with thy silver bow
Phœbus, these our joys allow !

Antistrophe.

Who, of all the heav'nly pow'rs,
Gave thee birth in these close bow'rs ?
Some bright Nymph of sylvan race
Did the frolic Pan embrace,
Wand'ring o'er the mountain's brow ?
Or to Phœbus dost thou owe
Thy birth ? For him the craggy height,
Him the pastured dales delight.
Or to him, the god who roves
Through Cyllene's cypress groves ?
Or did Bacchus, wont to tread
His loved haunt, the mountain's head,
Thee receive, confess'd his son,
From the Nymphs of Helicon ?
Raptured with their tuneful strain
Sportive oft he joins their train.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

ŒDIPUS, SHEPHERD, HERALD, CHORUS.

Œd. Whether or not the man we have so long
Been looking after, one at least whose age
Evens with his whose story we have heard.

Cho. Whether the same of whom the stranger
tells

I know not, but the man himself I know
For an old shepherd of King Laius.

Her. And I for him with whom I shepherded
Upon Kithæron's side so long ago.

Œd. Approach, old man—still nearer—un-
afraid ;

For nothing but my favour need you fear,
If, looking straight at me, as I at you,
Straightforwardly you answer what I ask.
You, in the days gone by, and long ere Time
Had strewn his silver honour on your head—
You were a servant of King Laius ?

Shep. His servant—not his slave—no less than
he,
Myself a freeman of the soil of Thebes.

Œd. As such I understand ; and in that wise
As a free servant of King Laius,
You kept his flocks ?

Shep. Upon a time I might.

Œd. And folding them at home in winter-
time,
Led them in Summer forth ?

Shep. So shepherds use,
Where'er the more and sweeter pasture grew.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Œd. And ever on Kithæron's grassy sides
In summer-time, remember you this man,
Old as yourself, keeping his flock with yours ?

Shep. Time that has silver'd, as you say, my
locks,
Has somewhat dimm'd both eyes and memory.

Œd. None older than your fellow-shepherd
here,
Who with his locks as silver-touch'd as yours,
Sees, and recalls in you the man of yore.

Shep. May be ; but all men are not all alike,
And he may err as well remembering me,
As I forgetting him.

Her. Listen to me,
And let my voice, and what it has to tell,
Recall to you the man your eyes do not.
Can you not call to mind, though long ago,
Keeping your flock with one whose flock, like
yours,
Grazed on Kithæron, one long summer through—

Shep. With more than one, may be.

Her. Nay, but with one
To whom, just as that same long summer closed,
And cold Arcturus warn'd the shepherd home,
You brought a naked infant—

Shep. Brought ? who brought ?

Her. Tied by the feet—

Shep. What should one know of that ?

Her. Being myself the man you gave it to.

Shep. Methinks this man, whoever he may be,
And howsoever gifted with good eyes,

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Is something weaker in his wits than I,
Recounting all such idle rhapsody.

Œd. And you, sharp-witted as you are, me-
thinks

Seem looking round about you for escape
In hesitation—but escape shall not.

Look you ! Beware !

Shep. What have I said amiss ?

Œd. Not said, but will not say.

Shep. What would you have ?

Œd. The babe your fellow-shepherd asks
about—

That naked, new-born, ankle-fetter'd babe,
Did not you bring and put into his hands ?

Shep. And would to Heaven had died before
I did !

Œd. And death you shall not have to pray
for long,

If, knowing what prevarication proves
You know, you not reveal.

Shep. And if reveal !

Have you not heard enough ?

Œd. No, if not all.

The babe you put into this shepherd's hands
Was not your own ?

Shep. Oh, not mine own !

Œd. Then whose ?

Shep. O Œdipus, my master, and my lord !

In mercy question me no more !

Œd. No more

In mercy if you answer not at once.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Shep. O me ! The terror of your countenance
Scatters what little memory age has left !
What if I found the little helpless thing
There laid alone and none to tell me whose ?
Or he from whom I took it knew no more
Than he to whom I gave it ?

Œd. Bind his hands :
The lash must loose the tongue.

Shep. O Œdipus,
Shame not white hairs !

Œd. Nay, shame them not yourself
By false prevarication with your King.
That helpless babe — me — Œdipus — your
King—

Who gave into your hands ?

Shep. Alas ! alas !
One of the household of the King that was !—

Œd. Slave ? Servant ? Who ?

Shep. Alas ! one now within
Can answer all !

Œd. Answer yourself then, who ?

Shep. Woe's me ! I drift into destruction's
mouth !

Œd. And I with you. But who ?

Shep. Alas ! The Queen !

Œd. The Queen !

Shep. Ev'n Iocasta's sacred self !

Œd. But not her own ?

Shep. I said not that—

Œd. Her own ?

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Shep. Yourself have said.

Cho. The man is turn'd to stone !

[*After a silence.*]

Œd. The God of Delphi has revenged himself !
His oracle defied of long ago,
And his insulted prophet's of to-day,
Break in one judgment o'er my head, who now,
Myself sole witness and interpreter,
Divine that half reveal'd is all fulfill'd,¹
And on myself myself pronounce my doom.

Cho. O Œdipus, my lord—

Œd. Speak to me not,
Approach me not, unless at once to slay,
Or thrust with execration from the walls,
The wretch convicted of the double crime
Of parricide, and—Ha ! the prophet said
That, ere the Day which all beholds go down,
I shall have look'd my last upon the Sun
Which all accomplishes—and, ere we pass
To darkness, somewhat yet is to be done.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

Ye race of mortals, what your state ?
Life I an airy nothing deem.
For what, ah ! what your happiest fate,
More than light fancy's high-wrought dream ?

¹ In the original, if I mistake not, Œdipus convicts himself of murdering his Father without asking the Evidence of the Witness he had sent for.

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

How soon those baseless dreams decay,
And all the glittering visions melt away !
 Whilst thy example, hapless king,
 Thy life, thy fortune I bewail,
Happy no man of mortal birth I hail.
Thine was no vulgar fate : its tow'ring wing
To wealth, and empire's splendid summit soar'd :
 When, silenced her mysterious lore,
The harpy-talon'd monster scream'd no more,
Our bulwark thou against that pest abhorr'd,
Thebes gave her sceptre to thy honour'd hand,
And hail'd thee monarch of a mighty land.

Antistrophe.

Who now is pierced with keener pain ?
To all thy glories bid farewell :
They fly, and in their stead a train
Of miseries crowd with thee to dwell.
To one great port, illustrious king,
Their gallant barks the son and father bring ;
But sink in wild waves roaring round.
How could thy father's bed so long,
Ah, how in silence bear the horrid wrong !
But thee th' all-seeing eye of time hath found,
And these unhallow'd rites abhorrent shows.
 Oh son of Laius, ne'er again,
Ne'er could my sorrowing heart thy sight sustain :
Yet I lament in mournful strains thy woes,
By thee 'twas mine to life, to light, to rise ;
By thee in dark despair to close my eyes.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

Mess. O venerable Senators of Thebes,
O liege-men of the house of Labdacus,
What shall you hear—what not behold—of such

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

Pollution in the Palace of your Kings,
Which all the waters in one volume drown'd
Of Nile and Ister could not wash away !

Cho. What we already have beheld and heard
Were but prophetic of yet worse to come ;
Tell us the worst.

Mess. If breath I have to tell,
If not the worst, the worse that first befell.
The light of Iocasta's life is quench'd !

Cho. Alas, not strange as terrible ! But how ?

Mess. By her own hand ; as by my eyes indeed
I cannot, but from others can, avouch,
With such bewilder'd senses as I may—
When, as you witness'd for yourselves, from hence
She fled, and flew distractedly within,
Shrieking, and tearing her grey locks, she ran
Along the echoing walls until she reach'd
The nuptial chamber, shot the bolt within,
And by the affrighted women lock'd without
Was heard calling on ' Laius, Laius !
Her husband Laius, father of the Son
Who slew, and worse dishonour'd him when
dead !'

This, and much more, and much more terrible,
They heard : and then a silence as of death,
Through all the house ; till with the sudden yell
As of some wild beast closing on his prey,
King Œdipus along the corridor
With imprecations half articulate,
Fearful to hear—too fearful to relate—
With thrice the force of the mad Herakles

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

He flung himself against the chamber-door,
And bursting in, to all who dared to look
Disclosed the wretched woman hanging dead.
Whom when he saw, roaring, he sprang upon,
And tearing from the beam flung down aheap,
And spurn'd ; and then, most horrible of all,
Wide open tore the raiment from her breast,
From which himself recoiling with a shriek,
He struck the golden clasp into his eyes,
Which having seen such things, henceforth, he
said,

Should in the light of Day behold no more
Those whom he loved, nor, in the after-dark
Of Hades, those he loathed, to look upon.
Then rising, blind, and bleeding as he was,
He groped and stagger'd back the way he came,
Vociferating as he went along
That none who would not share the curse with
him

Should touch unless to slay him—till he reach'd
The palace-door, and would, methinks, have that,
As of the nuptial chamber, open burst,
Had not King Creon bid them lead him in
Where none henceforth should hear, and none
behold,

Till Thebes his fate determine.—All is told.

CHORUS.

Oh men of Thebes, this famous man behold,
Who coming here a stranger to the gate,

ŒDIPUS IN THEBES

The Sphinx's fatal riddle did unfold,
And chosen King, as Saviour of the State
So greatly ruled, and rose to such Renown
As not a King but envied : now by Fate
To such a Depth precipitated down
As not a Wretch but may commiserate.
Beholding which, and counsell'd by the wise,
That Nemesis regards with jealous eyes
Man's over-much, and at his elbow stands
To shake the full cup in the steadiest hands,
Deem not the wisest of To-morrow sure,
Nor fortunate account him till he dies.

PART II

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ŒDIPUS.

ANTIGONE *his Daughter.*

POLYNICES *his Son.*

CREON OF THEBES.

THESEUS *King of Athens.*

AN ATHENIAN CITIZEN.

AN ATHENIAN MESSENGER.

HERALD FROM THEBES.

CHORUS OF ATHENIAN ELDERS.

*Scene: A road near ATHENS, bordered by the Sacred GROVE
of the EUMENIDES.*

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE

Œd. The dawn which breaks not on my
sightless eyes
Salutes my forehead with reviving warmth :
Here let us rest awhile, Antigone,
From this brief travel stol'n by fear from night.
But know you whither it hath led us, and
Among what strangers, who from charity
Shall with sufficient for the day provide
For one with less than little satisfied ?

Ant. I know from one who cross'd us in the
dusk,
With steps as hurried as our own, the land
Is Attica.

Œd. Ay, I remember now.

Ant. And not far off I see the shining walls
And marble temple-fronts, and citadel,
As of some stately city : and the place
We stand on, as for some peculiar use
Sequester'd from the daily track of men,
Where a pure rill of water rambles through

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Untrampled herbage, overshadowed all
With laurel, and with olive, poplar-topt,
As you may guess from many a nightingale
About us warbling, well assured of home.

Œd. And might not, haply, some poor hunted
thing,
With but a sorry burden for his song,
Here, too, some breathing-while of refuge find ?

Ant. And in good time comes of the country
one
Who shall advise us, lest, as strangers here,
We trespass on the usages of those
To whom we look for shelter and support.

Enter an ATHENIAN.

O stranger—

Ath. Hush ! Before another word—
Where ev'n a word unlawful—how much more
With the soil'd foot of Travel trespassing
On consecrated ground !

Œd. I yet dare ask
Whether to Deity, or Demigod,
Thus consecrate ?

Ath. To Deity, and such
As least of all will Men's intrusion brook
Within their hallow'd precincts.

Œd. Who be they ?

Ath. None other but those awful Sisters Three,
Daughters of Earth and Darkness.

Œd. By what name
Invoked of men ?

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Ath. By whatsoever name
Elsewhere invoked, here, with averted eyes,
And with an inward whisper—‘The Benign.’

Œd. Benign then, as their name and nature is
To those who suffer and who do no wrong,
May they receive the sightless suppliant, who,
By no false Insight, howbeit unaware,
Within their Sanctuary first setting foot,
Alive shall never leave it but to die.

Ath. Your words I understand not ; but I
know,
Whether to live or die, depart you must.

Œd. But what, if rather fearing unjust Man
Than the just God, and those same awful Three,
If stern to guilt, not unbenign to me,
I leave their hallow’d refuge ?

Ath. Nay, for that
The land itself is dedicated all
To God or Demigod, who, Just themselves,
Protect and vindicate the Just : for here
Poseidon rules, the Master of the Seas,
And there Prometheus, with his torch of Life ;
The ground about us glories in the name
Of King Colonus of the Horse ; and this
Same highway running by the Sacred Grove
Leads to the City and the Citadel
Surnamed of Her who keeps them for her own.

Œd. As such I do salute her !—And the King
That, under her, her chosen people rules—

Ath. Theseus, the son of Ægeus, and, like him,
Though mortal yet, almost the Demigod.

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Œd. Theseus, the son of Ægeus,—ay, I know
And know indeed that no delusive light
Led me to him with whom I have to do.
Shall one among your fellow-citizens
Bear your King word from one who once was King,
And who, unkinglike as his presence now,
Can tell him that which, if he hearken to,
Shall, for a little service done to me,
Do to his kingdom and himself much more?

Ath. Strange as the message from so strange
a man,
Yet shall King Theseus hear of it. Meanwhile,
If in despite of warning and advice
You still refuse to leave this holy ground,
I, that am but a simple citizen,
Dare not enforce; but forthwith shall apprise
Those of the City who shall deal with you,
As in their wisdom best they shall advise.

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE.

Œd. Is he departed?

Ant. We are all alone.

Œd. Daughters of Earth and Darkness! In
whose womb
Unborn till Sovereign Order the new World
From Chaos woke, yourselves you still secrete,
With those three Fatal Sisters who the thread
Of Human Life do spin among the Dead,
While you the scourge of human Wrong prepare;
If peradventure with unlicensed feet

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

The consecrated earth I have profaned,
That veils your Presence from this upper air,
Renounce me not : no, nor in me the God
Who destined, nor the God who prophesied,
That, after drifting the blind wreck I am
About the world, a Horror to Mankind,
Within the Temple of that Triple wrath
That Nemesis unyoked to scourge me down,
At last the haven of my rest should find ;
If satisfied at last be wrath Divine,
And men err not who name its ministers,
Though not without a shudder—‘ The Benign,’
Let your avenging Justice, that so long
Hath chased the guiltless instrument of Wrong,
Here grant him rest until the Power whose throne
You dwell beside in Darkness give the sign.

CHORUS, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE.

Cho. These are the strangers—this the sight-
less man,
And this the maiden that he told us of,
Who impiously this consecrated ground
Have ventured to profane.

Œd. Not impiously,
But ignorantly, who first setting foot
Upon this alien soil—

Cho. But impiously,
When warn’d upon what consecrated ground,
With honey-flowing waters running through
The inviolable herbage still persist—

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

A stranger too, where no Athenian born,
Not only dares not enter, but pass by
Save with averted eyes, and inward prayer,
That holy lips scarce dare articulate.

Ant. We must obey them, Father, as we should,

Œd. You will not, if I quit the Sanctuary,
Do, nor let others do me violence ?

Cho. Fear not the wrath of men, but that of
those
Who watch you through the soil which you
profane.

Œd. But who, if of their counsel more you
knew,
As sooner than you look for know you may,
Would not resent, as you, the wrong I do them.
Meanwhile, on no worse usage than from them
Relying when committed to your hands—
Lead me, Antigone.

Cho. Till you have pass'd
The bound of sequestration—further yet—
And yet a little further—so, enough.
There, travel-wearied, and, perchance, in years
Well stricken, rest upon the bank awhile.
But, ere I bid you welcome to the land
Whose sanctity your foot at first profaned,
Tell who you are, and whence.

Œd. To tell you ' Who '—
Would tell you all : and if I hesitate—

Cho. Not to declare your country and your
name
Augurs but evil for yourself or it.

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Œd. You of that City have heard tell, whose
walls
To Music rose, and whose Inhabitants,
From the sown Dragon's teeth sprung up arm'd
men ?

Cho. Of Thebes ? Ay, much of olden times,
and of
The worse than Dragon Sphinx that in our day
The Dragon seed devour'd.

Œd. And of the man
Who slew that worse than Dragon—
Cho. Œdipus!

As by the signal of those sightless eyes,
And lingering self-avowal, I divine—

Œd. Revolt not from me.

Cho. And for You ! for You—
May be, the monster most unnatural—
To set your foot upon the holiest spot
Of this all-consecrated Athens ! You !
Who, were your very presence not enow
Contamination to the land, and shame,
May bring on us the plague you left at Thebes !
I should not wrong a promise half implied
If with these hands I tore you from the Land
Your impious presence doubly violates,
Where e'en the guiltless dare not enter—Hence !
Begone ! Pollute our land no more ! Begone !

Ant. O men of Athens ! if you will not hear
My Father pleading for himself, hear me,
Not for myself, but for my Father pleading,
As to a Father, by the love you bear

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

The Daughter by yon Altar-hearth at home,
And by the Gods we worship as yourselves.

Cho. Daughter, the Gods whom you adjure
us by,
Repudiating Œdipus from Thebes,
From Athens also do repudiate.

Œd. O then of Fame that blows about the
world
The praise of men and nations, what the worth,
If Athens—Athens, through the world renown'd
For hospitable generosity—
Athens, who boasts the power as much as will
To save and succour the misfortunate—
If she that honour forfeit at your hands,
Who, from the very horror of my name,
And shapeless rumour of the terrible things
Which I have suffer'd, rather than have done,
Would thrust me from the Sanctuary forth
Of those whose law you violate no less
By broken Faith, than with unwary foot
Did I their consecrated soil transgress?
One, too, that howsoe'er you know it not,
Ev'n with the Ban that drives him from his own
Carries a Blessing with him to the Land
That shall accept him, and a Curse to those
Who, being his, henceforth shall be their foes.
All which, unto my inward eye as clear
As yonder Sun that shines in Heav'n to yours,
I shall reveal to him who governs here,
If hearing he deny me not. Meanwhile,
I do adjure you, by those Deities

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Whose Sanctuary you have drawn me from,
Do me no violence ; remembering
That, if Benign they be, Avengers too,
As of all outraged Law, so not the less
Of violated hospitality.

Cho. We have discharged ourselves in warning
you,
And to King Theseus, whom you summon'd
here,
Your cause and self hencetorward we commit
To deal with, and adjudge as seems him fit.

THESEUS, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CHORUS

Thes. I have been hither summon'd at the call
Of one from whom, 'twas said, the light of Day
Together with his Kingdom pass'd away :
And, knowing of one such, and one alone,
Reported in the roll of living men,
Nor uninstructed in the destiny
Which from the glory it had raised him to
Precipitated to a depth so low,
Amid the ruin of this fallen man
I know that Œdipus of Thebes is he.
I too remember when like him forlorn,
I wandered friendless in a foreign land,
And with an alien people much endured :
And, had I always been what now I am,
Yet none the less by what myself have known
Than by the records of Mankind, aware
That, howsoever great a King To-day,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

No surer of To-morrow than yourself;
Therefore whatever Athens or her King
Of hospitable service can supply,
Let him demand : for much indeed it were
For Œdipus to ask and me withhold.

Œd. O Theseus, if indeed the King I was
Look through the ruin of the wretch I am,
No less doth full assurance of a King,
Although to these quench'd eyes insensible,
Breathe through the generous welcome of your
word,
And ere of my necessities I tell,
Assure me of the boon as yet unask'd.
For the detested story of my life,
Unask'd, you know it—whence, and what I was,
To what catastrophe reserved you see—
Yet not so ignominious to myself,
No, nor to Athens so unprofitable,
Will you but listen, and do that for me,
Which, howsoever strange from lips like mine,
Is sure as Fate itself, as Fate it is.

Thes. Doubt not, however strange, whether
or not
To Athens profitable, if to you,
What Œdipus demands shall Theseus do.

Œd. But profitable shall it be to both,
Unless the Spokesman of Futurity
From Delphi shall have prophesied a lie :
For this unsightly remnant of a king—
Though while it breathes a burden to us both,
But when the breath is out of it, to be

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

More serviceable to you than good looks—
I do consign to you for sepulture
Under the walls that, as they shelter'd me
While living, after death will I defend.

Thes. But of the life you have to live between
This hour and that why take you no account?

Œd. No ; for the life between this hour and
that

In that sepulture is provided for.

Thes. You ask an easy favour at my hands,
Whether for life or death.

Œd. Nevertheless,
May be, to promise easier than to do.

Thes. How so?

Œd. Those loving friends of mine in Thebes,
Who would not when I pray'd them, now, per-
force,

If not per-suasion, when myself would not,
Will have me back with them.

Thes. And what if Thebes,
Relenting, or repenting, Œdipus—

Œd. O, not repenting or relenting, Thebes,
But by an Oracle of Phœbus scared,
Which told them that unless they get me home,
To live what Life they leave me, and, when
dead,

Lie tomb'd outside—*outside*, I say—their Gates
They shall not thrive in war against the foe,
Whose walls shall overshadow what they lose.
As Thebes shall find should ever strife arise
Between herself and Athens, if their King

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Vouchsafe me that which I have ask'd of him.

Thes. But Thebes and Athens, friendly powers of old,

What quarrel should arise to make them foes?

Œd. O Son of Ægeus! to the Gods alone
Belongs immunity from Change and Death :
All else doth all controlling Time confound.
Earth waxes old : and all that from her womb
She brings to light upon her bosom dies,
And all is mutability between.
Ev'n so with Man, who never at one stay,
No less in mind than body changeable,
Likes what he liked not, loathes where once he
loved,

And then perchance to liking turns again.
And as with man, with Nation none the less.
If now with Thebes and Athens all look fair,
Yet Time his furrow'd track of Night and Day
Pursues, wherein some grain of Discord dropt,
Perhaps no bigger than an idle word,
That shall infect his kindly Brotherhood,
And ripen'd Amity to rancour turn.
As one day—for I prophesy—shall be,
When my cold ashes underneath these walls
Shall drink the warm blood of my enemies—
Ev'n as they might upon this quarrel now,
Had Thebes not other foe to deal withal.

Thes. Rumour hath reach'd us of some war-
like stir.

But on what quarrel—

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Œd.

Thebes against herself.

For those two sons of mine, who for so long
In the Egyptian fashion, as I thought,
Kept house, and did the women's work within,
Now, full adult in arrogance and pride,
Assert their sex to quarrel for the throne
From which they banish'd me : Eteocles
The younger, with the subtle Creon's aid,
Not only seizes first, but yet withholds
The sceptre from his elder brother's hand ;
Who, as by sure intelligence I learn,
Hath fled to Argos, and so cunningly
Made good his cause, that King Adrastus there
Gives him his daughter's hand in marriage, and
Along with her, by way of royal dower,
A host in arms that shall reconquer Thebes,
And set my elder son upon—my Throne.
And now by Phœbus' Oracle forewarn'd
That Victory no less within my Tomb
Shall live than in what now survives of me,
And fearful now of what they wish'd before,
Lest any day should find, where they might
not,
Their victim, less by years than by the load
Of shame and woe they laid upon him, dead,
They dog my steps like vultures on the track
Of gathering battle, and the sharpest scent
May even now be close upon my heels.

Cho. Whether with Argos Thebes for war
prepares,

Behold a Herald, from whatever land

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

I know not, as a messenger of Peace
To Athens, with that Olive in his hand.

Enter HERALD from THEBES.

Her. Creon of Thebes by mine his Herald's
voice

To Theseus, King of Athens, greeting sends,
Craving from him due licence to confer
With Œdipus, the King of Thebes that was,
Now by report upon Athenian soil—

Œd. Oh, I forefelt his coming in the wind !—

Her. Until which licence granted by the King,
With a small retinue he waits aloof
Before advancing to the City's wall.

Thes. Your King does well ; and to his
courtesy

With a like greeting Athens shall reply.

Œd. Oh, let no greeting made to him impeach
What first vouchsafed to me !

Thes. Fear not for that :

The courtesy which courtesy returns
No less leaves Œdipus sole arbiter
To grant or to refuse what Thebes demands.

Œd. If so, this Herald need not tarry long,
Nor overtax his memory with the word
That I shall freight him with.

Thes. And yet methinks

That e'en from lips he loves not Œdipus
Might hear a word that should send up the scale
Which now so down against his Country weighs.

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

What once you heard, if when you heard it true
May, by the changing Time and Circumstance
Of which you tell me, now be Truth no more.

Œd. More false than Creon Falsehood cannot
be.

O Theseus, one of heart and speech yourself,
You know not what the double tongue can do.

Thes. Nay, but the tongue which you so
much distrust

Will have to deal not with myself but you,
Who know the man, and how to sift the word,
As once of one more cunning than himself.
And for all other argument than word,
Myself and Athens are engaged for that.

Œd. Be't so—vouchsafe but to be here your-
self,

As Witness and as Judge between us both,
And you shall hear the Truth from those false
lips

Wrung out, which had been told you by the
true,

Had not that busy Herald interposed
His olive leaf between yourself and me.

Thes. Witness I may be, but of neither Judge
In that which but concerns yourself and Thebes.
But, whichever way the scale may turn,
Not Judgment's self, save from the God's own
lip,

Against your will shall move you from my side.
Meanwhile, within the City, Œdipus,
With such observance as becomes myself

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

With me abide this meeting.

Œd. Ill beseems
The mendicant demurring at the hand
That but too generously deals with him.
But the prophetic voice of Destiny,
That led me hither, will not let me hence,
Till he have giv'n the signal to be gone.

Thes. Be't as you will ; with these good men
abide

Secure, as in my promise, which I call
The Power beside whose sacred grove we stand
To witness, as I pledge it with my hand.

Œd. Theseus, ere this the Gods whom you
adjure

Themselves had sworn by Fate the fore-decreed
Requit of that generosity
Which no requital looks for ; and I know
That even now, escaping through their hands,
The Blessing strives to anticipate the Deed.

Cho. But, that no evil influence thwart its way,
And to propitiate that jealous Power
Whose Sanctuary you at first profaned—
You, Œdipus, and you, whose pious hand
Leading him wrong, like expiation need—
Returning to the consecrated shade
Of one that in its inmost shadow dwells,
Its dedicated Priest and Minister,
The ceremonial he enjoins obey,
First, by lustration in the sacred stream ;
Then to the sacred Earth, whereunder keep
Those Three Benign ones ever on the watch,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Thrice three libations from three vessels pour—
Or honey mix'd with water, but no wine :
Which when the forest-shaded Earth has supp'd,
Upon her bosom olive wands thrice three
Lay with a prayer within the lips suppress'd ;
And then, with unreverting eyes to us
Returning, wait in confidence the rest.

CHORUS.

Strophe 1.

Well, stranger, to these rural seats
Thou comest, this region's blest retreats,
Where white Colonus lifts his head,
And glories in the bounding steed.
Where sadly sweet the frequent nightingale
Impassion'd pours her evening song,
And charms with varied notes each verdant vale,
The ivy's dark-green boughs among ;
Or shelter'd 'midst the cluster'd vine,
Which high above, to form a bow'r
Safe from the sun or stormy show'r,
Loves its thick branches to entwine ;
Where frolic Bacchus always roves,
And visits with his fost'ring Nymphs the groves.

Antistrophe 1.

Bathed in the dew of heav'n each morn
Fresh is the fair Narcissus born,
Of these great pow'rs the crown of old :
The Crocus glitters robed in gold.
Here restless fountains ever murm'ring glide,
And as their crisped streamlets stray
To feed, Cephisus, thy unfailing tide,
Fresh verdure marks their winding way ;

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

And as their pure streams roll along
O'er the rich bosom of the ground,
Quick spring the plants, the flow'rs around.
Here oft to raise the tuneful song
The virgin band of Muses deigns ;
And car-borne Venus guides her golden reins.

Strophe 2.

What nor rich Asia's wide domain,
Nor all that sea-encircled land
From Doric Pelops named, contain,
Here, unrequired the cult'ring hand,
The hallow'd plant spontaneous grows,
Striking cold terror through our foes.
Here blooms, this favour'd region round,
The fertile Olive's hoary head ;
The young, the old behold it spread,
Nor dare with impious hand to wound :
For Morian Jove with guardian care
Delights to see it flourish fair ;
And Pallas, fav'ring, from the skies
Rolls the blue lustre of her eyes.

Antistrophe 2.

My voice yet once more let me raise,
Yet other glories to relate :
A potent god for these we praise,
His presents to this favour'd state ;
The Steed obedient to the rein,
And safe to plough the subject main.
Our highest vaunt is this, thy grace,
Saturnian Neptune, we behold
The ruling curb emboss'd with gold
Control the courser's managed pace.
Though loud, O King, thy billows roar,
Our strong hands grasp the well-form'd oar ;
And, while the Nereids round it play,
Light cuts our bounding bark its way.

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

THESEUS, ŒDIPUS, CREON, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

Thes. Son of Menœceus, of the realm of
Thebes,

A Ruler, and its Representative ;
Your peaceful advent by your Herald's voice
Duly proclaim'd as much from me demands
Of courteous welcome and acknowledgment.
The purport of your mission to this Land
Yourself have told me, as foretold by him,
Who, till to-day a stranger like yourself,
And by no Herald like yourself announced,
Yet once a King, is still a King to me.
And at his bidding am I present now,
Not as a Judge between you to decide
A question that concerns yourselves alone,
But to hear that which, though he needs it not,
Should justify that honour at my hands
Which his ill Fate has forfeited in Thebes ;
And as a King in Athens to remain,
If by persuasion or just argument
You fail to move him ev'n to reign with you.

Cre. O Theseus, Son of Ægeus, and still more
Than Ægeus' self about the world proclaim'd,
Slayer of the fiery-breathing Minotaur,
And hordes of Men than one such monster worse :
The Monarch of a State, if any in Greece,
In men and means abounding, of the Gods
Observant, and of Justice to Mankind,
With your world-famous Areopagus,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

No less for Wisdom than for Arms renown'd,
Like Her whose tutelary name you boast.
On what a peaceful mission I am come,
My Herald first, and the small retinue
That follows me, sufficiently declare :
To trespass not on foreign Land or Law—
No, nor on his who, having found his way,
Hath found a home on this Athenian soil ;
But whom, with what fair argument I may
Of Kindred and of Country, I would fain,
However royally entreated here,
Persuade with me back to his home again.

Cho. You know the man, though, haply, not
the man

He was, whom now you are to deal withal.

Cre. Therefore to him will I address myself,
In words as few and unrhetical
As simple Truth needs to be clothed withal
In summing a momentous question up :
Praying the Goddess underneath whose shade
We here are standing to direct them home.
O Œdipus ! my Brother—once my King—
And King once more to be, will you but hear
What for myself, and with me Thebes, I speak ;
Sore wearied both under this long divorce
From one that once the Saviour was of all,
Under a judgment which your evil Fate
Prepared, yourself invoked on your own head,
And Thebes must execute if Thebes would live.
But as no judgment wrought by human hand,
And most to him that suffers from the blow,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

But of the shaking hand that dealt it tells—
What of misdeed, or of misfortune what,
Suffer'd or done—unwittingly by you
Done, and by Thebes unwillingly redress'd—
Behold at last, by Fate's accomplishment,
The Oracles of Phœbus justified,
The Gods by expiation of the Curse
Appeased, and Thebes once more herself again,
Like one recover'd from a mortal throe,
And fain to fold him to her heart once more
Who saved her once, and yet a second time
Who sacrificed himself that she might live ;
Your Country reaches out beseeching arms,
Land over land, until she finds you here,
Among a People, with a King alike
In hospitality renown'd as arms,
But, welcome and entreat you as they may,
Who cannot be to you, nor you to them,
As Œdipus to Thebes, or Thebes to him.
Wherefore I do beseech you, Œdipus,
By all the ties that man to man endear
Of kindred and of country ; by all those
That King to People bind, as them to him :
Yea, by the God, who, for a secret end
That Man not fathoms, having parted them,
Now, reconciled himself, would reconcile ;
Be all that erring Man on either side
Hath done amiss forgotten as forgiv'n,
And Œdipus and Thebes as one again.
Look ! I, more burden'd than yourself by years ;
And, little as you think it, like yourself

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Bow'd down with execution of the Doom
Whereunder you now labour self-condemn'd,
With long and weary travel have I come,
Half fearful of less prosperous return,
Imploring you, if I cannot persuade
With argument that shall commend itself,
If not to you, to those you trust in here,
Yet in the eyes of Athens shame me not
By sending empty-handed back to Thebes.

Cho. The Man has spoken : and to us it seems
In well-consider'd word, King Œdipus,
And temper that invites a like reply.

Œd. Temper and word so well consider'd,
friends,
That, unaccustom'd as I long have been
To civil greeting till I lighted here,
And haply not the man I was to guess
The well-consider'd word—But thus it runs :
That, satisfied at length with all the shame
And beggary Thebes condemn'd and left me to,
To expiate the crime—

Cre. I said not that—

Œd. On which just Judgment done—though,
by the way,
Granting the Judgment just, I yet might ask
If you, my kinsman, and those sons of mine,
Must needs become its executioner ?

Cre. To Greece do I appeal if you yourself
On your own head drew not the Judgment down
Which Fate decreed and Phœbus prophesied,
And upon which the People's Being hung ;

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

And which who but the People's Magistrate,
Kinsman or other, needs must execute ?

Œd. By setting on the rabble pack of Thebes
To yelp me through the gates ? But let that pass :
For now the rabble pack, to make amends,
Send those who set them on to hunt me back.

Cre. If you will have it so, so must it be :
So but to good result on either side.

Œd. Yet somewhat late amends on yours, I
think,

Whether by People or by Magistrate :
Who, when the Plague by ceasing long ago
Proved Expiation duly made by me,
And I myself, worn with the load of shame
I bore about with me among strange men,
Cried out to lay my weary burden down—
Were't with my life—among mine own oncemore,
Then would you not to my entreaty grant
What, unbesought, you come beseeching now.

Cre. The People, panic-stricken with the storm
That, having made such havoc in their ranks,
Had scarcely pass'd, still dreaded its return.

Œd. And prithee, Creon, how recomforted,
And to my presence reconciled at last ?

Cre. The Magistrates whom you so much
distrust,

Adding the voice of their authority
To theirs who by their sacred ministry
The will of Heaven divine—

Œd. Teiresias still !
Whose reflux years against the base itself

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Of Delphi breaking shiver out of sight ?
Ay, he it was who with its breath surcharged,
First trumpeted me forth ; and now perhaps,
When other Augury and Omen fail'd
People and Magistrate to reassure,
By some new summons from the Delphian shrine,
Hath quicken'd Thebes to reconciliation
By something stronger than regretful Love.

Cre. What mean you, Œdipus ?

Œd. No more but this ;
That, as I wander'd—not so long ago—
About the world begging my daily bread,
A little wind from Delphi wandering too
Came up with me, and whisper'd in my ears
That, unless Thebes should have me back again,
She would not thrive in arms against the foe
That even then was knocking at her doors.

Cre. I scarcely thought the selfsame Œdipus,
Who scarce would heed Apollo's Prophet once,
Should for a Prophet's take the wandering voice
Of rumour in the wind.

Œd. And, did I not,
As, spite of taunt, now better taught, I do,
The pious Creon never fail'd in faith,
And by his presence here and now attests
That wandering voice from Delphi told me true :
And somewhat more. For, to be plain with you,
Another wind, that not from Delphi blew,
But somehow slipping through your city gates,
Whisper'd how Thebes, of that same Oracle
From Delphi self-assured, but not the less,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Despite of Augur and of Soothsayer,
Still apprehensive of my presence there,
Would have me back—would have me back
indeed,

Not while I lived to fold me to her heart
With those beseeching arms you tell me of,
But at arm's length—outside the city walls—
Like some infectious leper there to bide
Till Death, which surely could not come too fast,
And might perchance be quicken'd if too slow,
Even in death dishonour'd as in life,
Should safely hide me in the ground below.

Cre. What! has some traitor been deluding
you

With some swoll'n rumour of the market-place?

Œd. Traitor to you, as true to me, but not
To you more traitor than to you yourself,
If, as I think, who cannot see your face—
I thank the Gods I cannot—but those here
Shall witness where the startled countenance
Convicts the false denial of the tongue.

Cre. Ev'n were that babbling traitor's word
as true

As he is false, I see not Œdipus
Much otherwise among his new friends here,
Than among those he counts for foes at home.

Œd. You see not, for you know not how ere
long—

How soon I know not, but not long, I know—
What others here now witness, standing round,
And some you see not watching underground,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Why from this spot, by which I first set foot,
I would not—no, not to be seated by
King Theseus' side in his Acropolis,
I would not move until I went to die.
Whether or no you guess my mystery,
Enough ! you see I have unravell'd yours.
Begone ! You lose but time and tongue—Begone !
And tell your people this on your return :
That, were the word from Delphi, and the word
From Thebes as false as you pretend it—yea,
False as yourself—I would not back with you ;
No—not were all the Dragon brood of Thebes,
From the first armèd harvest of the teeth
That ancient Cadmus sow'd the field withal
Raised from the dust to join the living host
Who yell'd me forth—all these, and all the way
From Thebes to Athens grovelling at your heels
Back would I not with you—no, not to reign
Enthroned among them as I was before,
Much less a tainted leper like to lie
Outside your walls while living, and, when dead,
There huddled under as a thing accursed,
Save for the Victory that within me lies,
And shall but quicken as the body dies.
No ; the same answer that I make to you,
Take home with you to all : on this same spot
Of earth, which now I stand a beggar on,
Beside this consecrated Grove, in which
By no delusive Inspiration drawn
I first set foot—I say, my Throne is here,
Deep-based as Hades, fix'd as Fate itself ;

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

And this poor staff I long have lean'd upon
The Sceptre, wherewith from the world beneath
I shall direct the issues of the war
That shall determine wingèd Victory
To settle on the Land where tomb'd I lie.

Cre. Theseus, in vain to reason with a man,
Still more the slave that evermore he was
Of Passion which inveterates with years ;
Suspecting even those who mean him well,
As once myself ; and when, to his own cost,
Falsely he found, as with such men it fares,
He first injustice justifies by worse.
Therefore to you, King Theseus, and to these
Grave Councillors of Athens, I appeal :
And, irrespective of the ties that bind
All men to kith and country, but which he,
Despite all loving offer on their side,
Irreconcilably repudiates—ask,
If that same Oracle which he pretends
By some vague rumour reach'd his ears say true,
And that victorious power, as he pretends,
Be lodged in him, whether alive or dead—
Is he not bound, reluctant though he be,
With his returning presence to requite
The deadly mischief which it wrought before ?—
A Pestilence so terrible to Thebes
As almost to extermination thinn'd
Her people, and yet leaves but half array'd
Against the foe now knocking at her doors.
For such a foe we have to deal withal—
Adrastus, King of Argos, who, by this

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Man's son, and by his own ambition, led,
Has, with some several powers allied with him,
Raised such a Force as threatens to destroy
What little life the Father left in Thebes,
And either to reconquer and there reign,
Or raze our sacred ramparts to the dust.
And on that second count I ask again—
Whether, if that wing'd Victory do indeed
Abide with him, he be not doubly bound,
By now submission to his country's will
To counter-expiate his son's revolt,
While for past wrong atoning for himself?
And furthermore I ask, would it beseem
A King and People wise and just as this,
If not with Thebes confederate, not her Foe,
Who, disregarding, as I know you do,
All visionary profit for yourselves,
Would not escape that censure in men's eyes,
Withholding—nay, before those jealous eyes
Upholding—one who, for his sake—still more
For hers who innocently shares the shame—
Were better in the bosom of his own
To veil the remnant of a life defaced
If not by Crime—yet by Calamity
So crime-akin—so terrible—twofold—
Of Parricide and—

Œd. Shameless villain, hold
Who in the compass of this brief appeal
Before these reverend Elders and their King,
Dare show the double face and double tongue
For which of old you were notorious :

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

First with fair honey-sweet cajoling words
Seeking to entice ; and, when the honey fail'd,
Intimidating with unsheathèd sting,
As impotent to wound as that to win.
Intimidate, I say—not me alone,
But this great People and their Sovereign,
Who dare, forsooth, who dare between us stand
With talk—O not of Crime forsooth—but of
Calamity so crime-like—'twas the word—
So cunningly confused, that when at first
You came, propitiation on your tongue,
The word of pity floated on the top,
But when that fail'd, then Crime came uppermost,
And Crime left ringing in this people's ears.
Lest which—albeit but empty breath, I know,
To good King Theseus, and his Councillors,
But with the Citizens, less well advised,
Ring out the old alarm that shall again—
And let it !—rouse the cry of baffled Thebes,
I will arrest, and from denial false,
Or the less guilty silence of consent,
Convict you once for all, and let you go.
Was't not predicted, ev'n before my birth,
By Phœbus, Fate's unerring Oracle,
That I should slay my father ? And the God
Provided for his own accomplishment,
Ev'n by the very means that father took
To wrench out of my hands his destiny,
As old Kithæron wots of to this hour.
For Fate, that was not to be baffled thus,
And Phœbus, that was not to be forsworn,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

There found and rear'd me till my arm was strong
To do the execution they fore-doom'd.
Yea, on the very road King Laius
Again was going to that Oracle
He fondly dream'd—as afterward his son
More vainly bragg'd—of having foil'd before,
I met—I smote—I slew—my Father—yes—
And you, before this presence, answer me !
If one you knew not save that King he were,
Upon the public thoroughfare of men
Had struck you, no less royal than himself ;
Would you, sedate and pious as you are,
In youth and courage strong as I was then—
Would you have paused to think whether, in all
The roll of human possibility
The man who smote you might not in his veins
Have running blood akin to that in yours,
Or, in the sudden wrath of self-defence,
Retaliated with a counter-blow ?
Yea ! as the very Father whom I slew,
Could his voice reach us though the earth
 between,
Would ev'n now bear me witness, as he shall
When I rejoin him in the world below ;
That, howsoever for the world's behoof,
The Gods, albeit with pitying eyes from heaven,
Chastise the guiltless instruments of crime
For which they know that Fate is chargeable,
They look not with a like compassion down
Upon those mortal agents of their doom
Who, with a vengeance more implacable,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Pursue and persecute—ay, let it be
The Parricide !—The Parricide !—
And for that yet more terrible mischance
That follow'd—and for which yourselves in
Thebes

Were, under Destiny, responsible—
All shameless as thou art, art not ashamed
Before an alien People and their King
To breathe—as breathe thou wert about to do
Had not I swept it from thy lips unsaid
The Word which not myself alone involves,
But one—whose Memory *Thou* least of all
Shouldst have untomb'd—involves, I say, in that
Which unaware to have done is less shame
Than with aforethought malice to proclaim !

Cho. If to King Creon Reason heretofore
Seem'd choked in wrath, 'tis not to wonder now
That, with this burst of Fury overwhelm'd,
He leaves in silence Theseus to reply.

Thes. Albeit on either side appeal'd to now,
And whichever way myself inclined,
I shall not from my former purpose swerve ;
To stand as Witness, not as Arbiter,
Between two Princes of an alien land,
Whereof one yet is Ruler, and though fall'n
From rule the other, still a King to me.
To whom, first coming to the land I rule,
I pledged an oath by those Eumenides
Beside whose sanctuary e'en now we stand,
That if Persuasion and fair Argument
Should fail with him,—as fail'd it has, you see,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Nor less with her, who, wedded to his fate,
Clings all the closer to her father's side—
No power but Heav'n's should move him from
my land.

And therefore, heedless what the world may say,
Well knowing that my hospitality
To no remoter self-advantage looks,
I should not—even if not engaged by oath—
I should not from my plighted promise swerve.

Cre. I may not, were I minded—I, with these
Few followers—in the teeth of Athens arm'd,
Arraign the adverse judgment of their King;
But to the courteous welcome I have met,
Reciprocating with a like farewell,
Must to my people leave on my return
How minded, and how temper'd, to receive
This unforeseen denial of their right.

Thes. That you shall settle with your friends
at home ;
And in what temper and to what result
Among yourselves decided and declared,
Thebes shall not find our Athens unprepared.

CHORUS

Strophe 1

Were I where the dauntless train
Swells the battle's brazen roar ;
On the hallow'd Pythian plain ;
Or the torch-illumin'd shore,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Where for men their holy flame
O'er the sacred Mysteries wakes,
And 'mongst Priests of honour'd name
Where his station Silence takes,
Wont his golden key to bear
In his firm tongue-locking hand !
There the warrior Theseus, there
Join'd the virgin sisters stand ;
There they shall soon the conflict share,
And pour the torrent rage of war.

Antistrophe 1.

Westward haply on the plain,
Where the white and rocky steep
Tow'rs o'er Oia's rich domain,
May th' ensanguined battle sweep :
Where impetuous in their speed,
Glowing with the flames of war,
Warriors spur the foaming steed,
Other warriors roll the car.
Brave the youths who here reside,
Brave th' Athenian troops in fight ;
Shine their reins with martial pride,
All their trappings glitter bright ;
These honours in their rich array
To Pallas all and Neptune pay.

Strophe 2.

Is the dreadful work begun ?
Or does ought their force delay ?
O let me give the glad presages way !
Soon shall yon bright ethereal sun
Behold him, vaunting now no more,
Compell'd th' afflicted virgin to restore,
Afflicted through her father's woes.
Each day some deed effected shows,
The ruling hand of righteous Jove.
I am the prophet of a prosperous fight.
Had I the pennons of a dove
High o'er the clouds to whirl my flight,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Then should my raptured eyes behold
The victory my thoughts foretold.

Antistrophe 2.

Thou in heav'n's high throne adored,
Sovereign of the gods above,
Give strength, O pow'rful all-beholding Jove,
Give conquest to my country's lord ;
With glory mark his purple way,
And make the ambush'd foe an easy prey !
Pallas, propitious hear my pray'r,
And show that Athens is thy care !
Thee, Hunter Phœbus, skill'd to trace
The sylvan savage in his rapid flight ;
Thee, whom the pleasures in the chase
Of the fleet, spotted hind delight,
Thee I implore, chaste Huntress Maid,
Aid her brave sons, our country aid !

ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

Mes. Where is King Œdipus ?

Cho. Behold him here.

Mes. King Œdipus, Theseus, of Athens King,
Hath sent me back with this report full speed :
That Creon with a cloud of armèd men
Whom we found ambush'd on a neighbouring
height,

Without encounter, but with lowering brows,
And muttered thunder of Revenge to come,
Broke up and blew away the way they came.

Œd. The Gods be praised, and Theseus blest
withal !

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Mes. Who bids me tell you further what
myself

Did also witness ; that, as we returned,
Before Poseidon's Altar by the way,
Whereat we stay'd to sacrifice and pray,
A strange man, as with distant travel worn,
And low beneath a load of sorrow bow'd,
By that same Altar they both worshipp'd at
Besought a boon of Theseus ; and, when ask'd
His country, name, and parentage replied,
From Argos—

Œd. Argos !

Mes. But himself, he said,
The Son of Œdipus, once King of Thebes,
Whom, ere he went to conquer and retrieve
By arms the throne usurp'd from both in Thebes,
With many tears King Theseus he besought
To see, perchance before he went to die :
And Theseus, moved by pity for the man,
And reverence for the shrine by which he
pray'd—

Œd. I will not see him !

Cho. Nay, consider yet ;
As by the sacred earth you stand beside
From Theseus welcome for yourself you found,
So by the shrine at which with Theseus pray'd
Your son, refuse not what to Creon granted
Of hearing and reply.

Mes. So pray'd the King.

Ant. Oh, Father, young and maiden as I am,
Unfit to lift my voice among these men,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Yet hear me—if not for my brother's sake,
May be less guilty than you now believe,
Or if yet guilty, not impenitent,
Who comes to plead forgiveness at your feet—
If not for his sake, Father, yet for mine—
Let me but see my brother's face once more,
And hear his voice, before he goes to die.

Œd. You know not what you ask, Antigone ;
But thus by Theseus at the altar's side
Entreated, let what has to be done,
And leave me to such peace as may be mine.

Cho. And yonder, lo ! the solitary man
Comes slowly weeping hither.

Ant. Oh, my brother !

Cho. Approach, unhappy man, approach, and
plead
Your sorrows, and, as you deserve, succeed.

POLYNICES, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

Pol. Appeal ! Alas, how scarcely dare approach,
Who scarce aloof dare contemplate through tears
That Vision of paternal majesty,
Or his misfortune like my own deplore !
Beholding him an outcast like myself,
In sorry raiment—travel-torn as mine—
With that bow'd head, those tangled locks that
fall

O'er the benighted temple of his brows ;
And her, who, like my father, loved me once,
And even now whose falling tears confess

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

That ev'n the eternal love she bears to him
Hath not yet quencht the Sister in her heart—
Oh, wretched, and part-guilty as I am,
Albeit the judgment on yourself you brought,
Of living worse than death that Thebes might
live,
Had I but known—but heard—much more had
seen,
What now I see, and know, had never been ;
Never had been—much less so long endured,
And shall no longer, now I witness, be,
Despite of those who drown'd my single voice,
As now their treason has confounded me.

No word ? No sign ? revolted from me still ?—
For, were I guilty as you guilty deem,
Yet not so guilty as Eteocles,
Who proves himself arch-criminal tow'rd you
By after treason to your elder-born,
Seizing the Throne which, if you leave, devolves
Upon your first-born second self in me.
This hath Eteocles, my Brother, done,
By subornation of the Citizens,
With the connivance of the subtle Creon,
Who spins his web within the City walls
To catch the Sons, their Father as he caught,
Involving us in that unnatural strife
By which he purposes, when rid of one,
To rule the other ; or, destroying both,
Himself in title as in deed to reign.
Thus me, who least came easy to his hand,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Hath he like you driv'n out, like you to seek
And find a country and a home elsewhere ;
You, on this hospitable soil, with this
Great Sovereign and his generous people here ;
Whom, without asking further service from,
Nor wishing to dis sever from your side,
Unless by restoration to your own
To sweeten separation from themselves,
I do implore you, Father, were it but
With one relenting gesture of the hand,
One speechless inclination of the head,
Vouchsafe your wretched son some dawning sign
Of that forgiveness, wherewith fully arm'd,
I may for more than past misdeed atone,
By vengeance upon those who wrong us both.
For when, so foully by those two betray'd,
I fled to Argos, King Adrastus there
Gave me not only welcome when I came,
But after, when possess'd of all my wrongs,
His daughter's hand in wedlock ; and with that,
By way of dowry, such an Host in Arms,
As, with the favour of the Gods, which your
Forgiveness, oh my Father ! shall secure,
Shall Thebes recover, and re-throne us both.
For look ! for us a seven-fold Armament
By seven such Champions headed and array'd
As yet the world has not together seen,
Leagued in our cause ; Amphiaraus first,
For Divination famous as for Arms,
Knowing the issue of the War he joins ;
Ætolian Tydeus next ; and next to him

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Eteoclus of Argos ; and the fourth,
Hippomedon : then Capaneus, who boasts
Of bringing down the walls of Thebes by Fire :
Parthenopæus next of Arcady,
So from his mother Atalanta named :
And seventh, and last, myself, your elder-born,
And right successor to your dynasty.
With sev'n such Champions, and with such an
Host,

One need we yet to consecrate our arms
And triumph in the cause which is your own.
Wherefore, repenting what unfilial wrong,
By others wrought on, I have done to you,
Hither on foot from Argos am I come,
A contrite suppliant at my Father's feet ;
Imploring him, by all those Household Gods
Whose statues are before our palace door—
Yea, by the faithful men within the walls,
Who, to a statue-like inaction cowed,
Stand mutely wondering for their absent lord—
And for her sake who, having shared so long
Your sorrow, now your triumph shall partake—
Remit your righteous wrath against a son,
Who, tow'rd you guilty as he may have been,
And all distasteful in your eyes as now,
Shall now for more than past misdeed atone,
Or, in just retribution failing, fall.

(After a long pause.)

Œd. Hath this man said all he came charged
to say ?

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Cho. So from the unruffled silence into which
His words have fall'n and vanish'd I conceive.

Œd. But that the Sovereign Ruler of this
Land

Had sent this man to me, and thought it well
That I should hear and answer, hear I might,
But not a word of answer from my lips :
No, nor a sign, save with averted face,
And one blind warning of the hand—' Begone !'
But thus entreated, by the word of one
Whose word should be the law of Love to me,
And of the friendly Council here beside,
I will not only hear, but will reply—
Such a reply as he that asks for it
Shall wish he had not come so far to hear.
Who—Wretch !—who when thou hadst the
sovereign power,
Which now thy Brother to himself usurps,
Then—not cajoled nor forced, as you pretend—
For was not I, the Victim, Witness too ?—
But, one with them, didst set the rabble on
To hoot me forth to shame and beggary ;
Yea, when, not like yourselves implacable,
The God allow'd and I besought return,
Still shut me out, and, but to serve your ends,
Still would have let me linger till I died
In a strange country, and in such a plight
As now, forsooth, you weep to look upon !
Thou hypocrite ! with those pretended tears
Of false contrition, which, were't true, too late,
Think'st to cajole me with a show of Love—

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Ay, of such Love wherewith a man regards
The tool he needs to work his purpose with,
And forthwith fling regardlessly away,
Laying on those the load of infamy
Thou sharèdst with them of the royal spoil
They stole from me, and now, like other thieves,
Would keep between themselves, outwitting thee,
Who, them outwitting, to thyself wouldst keep ?
Oh Fool as Hypocrite ! suspecting not
How that most cunning rogue of all the three
Has been before you, and the mask you wear,
But that, behind it playing such a part
In his mid passion he was forced to drop,
And, as he fled discomfited away,
Left you to wear, and to a like result.
Fools both, as Hypocrites ! suspecting not
That he you would deceive your errand knows,
Each to win back the stolen stakes you lost—
The Kingdom once without the King, but now
The King himself to bring the Kingdom back ;
Who, flung before as offal from your walls,
Is now become a treasure of such price
As each of you would fain get home again,
Like stolen treasure—to be buried there.
You see I know your errand : if you fail
To guess my answer—
One way lies Argos, and another Thebes,
Which those tired feet might fail to reach in
time ;
But could you borrow Hermes' feather'd heel
Might catch your Rival ere the Sun goes down,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

And from his lip learn all. If not from him,
Then somewhat later, from your brother there,
When you shall meet him, arm to arm, in arms,
Under the wall where you would bury me.
Then might you tell him in return, were not
The story swallow'd up enacting it,
How, as he speaks, your living Father's Ghost
Foresees you both, up-looking from the tomb
In which your hopes of conquest die with him,
You, not the Champion leading, lance-erect,
Your Argive Host to sack your native Thebes ;
Nor him within it in mock majesty
Posting his people to defend the Gates :
Not thus, but in your golden feathers both,
Where one another challenging you stood,
Stretch'd in the dust, slain by each other's hand.
This, standing on the consecrated ground
Of those avenging Sisters underneath
Who hear, and even as I speak prepare
To do their destined work, I prophesy ;
You never to reconquer or regain
The Kingdom lost where he shall never reign ;
But ev'n before the walls that you contest,
Die, slaying him by whom yourself are slain !

Cho. Terrible words from human lip to hear !
And by what witness from what other world
Attested, as methought heard once before,
While this man spoke, and heav'n and earth
look'd clear !

Ant. Alas ! Alas ! for my belovèd Brother !

Pol. Ay, and Alas ! not for myself alone,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

But for all those arm'd in my cause, Alas !
To whom returning I may not reveal
The doom of death to me, to them defeat !

Ant. Oh then by all you worship, and hold
dear,

Return to Argos not ; or, if return,
Revealing that you carry back with you,
Revolt them from your fatal Enterprise,
And, leaving graceless Thebes to go her way,
With those you loved, and you are loved by, live !

Pol. Love me they would no more, Antigone,
If, having roused them at the trumpet's sound
To arms, both Men and Champions, in my cause,
Then to dissuade them, if dissuade I could,
By rumour of uncertain Prophecies,
And Malediction that to them would seem
But empty raving of impotent wrath.
Or, ev'n would they retreat, as will they not,
Could I endure in Argos to survive
My younger brother's laughing-stock in Thebes ?

Ant. Oh, better that than this unnatural war,
Which cannot end, which cannot end, I know,
But with the fatal consequence that leads
Or haunts my Father's footsteps where he goes !
While the false Creon, who has set you on,
Shall mock you both, who die that he may win !

Pol. Too late, too late, Antigone, too late !
And when that comes which is foredoom'd, and I
Lie stark and cold before the walls of Thebes,
With him whom slaying I am doom'd to die,
Shall not one pious hand, Antigone,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Protect your lifeless brother from the dog
With some few handfuls of his Mother Earth ?

Ant. Oh, but it shall not need ! You shall
not go !

If not for Love, in Pity, for you both,
My Father shall relent !

Pol. But Fate shall not.

Œd. No, by that other roll of thunder, no !

Cho. Again ! Yet not a cloud in Heav'n
above—

Œd. These are no thunders from the hand of
Zeus,

But the dark Ruler of the World below,
Reverberating from the vault of Heav'n—
Shall some one here go straightway to your King,
And bid him, whatsoever busied with—
Yea, were it by the Altar worshipping,
Forthwith unworshipp'd leave it ; for the God
Who links the Fate of Athens with mine own,
By those three thunders hence has summon'd me.
Gather no dust upon the feet of him
Who goes this errand : for the God, I know,
Who, brandishing aloft his Oracles
Accomplish'd, in one compass of the sky
From my meridian drove me to my fall,
And, as himself he sank behind the Night,
Into the hands of those who therein rule
My destiny resign'd—the God, I say,
Whose rising found me here, with his descent
Shall take me down with him, and leave me
there.

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

CHORUS.

Strange things hath this day witness'd and heard
tell

By the strange man whom Phœbus from the
stream

Of Ocean rising with his levell'd beam
Surprised, as with a cloud of Oracle

Encompass'd, in the consecrated shade
Of those who underneath more darkly dwell,
Whose more propitious name scarce daring we
To whisper, he—seemingly not unheard—

No, nor unanswer'd—calls on undismay'd.
Strange things—and if the word of presage hold,

Not unattested by those thunders three,
Yet stranger are we likely to behold,

Prophetical of Evil if to some,
To Athens, and her People and her Kings,
Auspicious all, and for all time to come.

THESEUS, ŒDIPUS, ANTIGONE, CHORUS.

Thes. Look, at your bidding, Œdipus, once
more

I come, prepared to do as I have done
Of hospitable service all I may.

Œd. Yea, once more, Theseus, and for one
last time,

Before the God recalls me to himself,
Have I recall'd you, to solicit nought,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

But the good service of a single day,
Which, were life longer, were, I know, life-long,
With Death's eternal blessing to repay :
Which when I prophesied as soon to be,
Not knowing then how soon ; but knowing now.

Thes. By what assurance, Œdipus ?

Œd. By those
Three subterranean thunders summon'd hence.

Thes. From Athens ?

Œd. From the eyes of Athens, ay ;
And yet nowhither else : a mystery
Whose peremptory resolution
The God who loves you but for you delays.

Thes. I must believe that one whom destiny
Hath step by step oracularly led,
Reads and interprets right the wondrous Signs
Which others but attest and wonder at.

Œd. And for a further witness and a last—
Blind as I am, and hitherto so long
Compell'd to find my way with others' eyes,
Myself shall those who led me forthwith lead
Along the road where that shall have to be
Which other eyes than Theseus' none may see.
Which having seen, King Theseus, in your heart
Keep unreveal'd ; and when you come to die,
To him alone who after you the Throne
Of Athens mounts reveal it ; he in turn
To him who him shall follow ; and so forth,
From hand to hand, until the end of Time :
Not trusting that into the People's hand,
Who, loyal, wise, and pious, let them be,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Seducible by those seditious few
That still infest the soundest Commonweal,
Abuse the power committed to their hands,
And by disorder and revolt at home
Lay bare your bosom to the foe without.
And now the Powers to you and yours Benign,
Who thrice have call'd me from the world
below,
Now that the word of vantage in your heart
Is register'd, will brook no more delay,
And the mute Hermes of the lower world,
Ev'n as I speak, prepares to lead the way.

CHORUS.

Strophe.

If I may thee, infernal Queen,
Thou gloomy pow'r by mortal eyes unseen,
With holy awe revere ;
And thee, stern Monarch, whose terrific sway
The dreary realms of night obey,
Hear Pluto, Pluto hear !
Let not pangs of tort'ring pow'r
Rack the stranger's dying hour,
While the cheerless path he treads
To the Stygian house that leads.—
Guiltless thou wast doom'd to know
Various ills and bitter woe :
May the god with just regard
Grace thee with a bright reward !

Antistrophe.

Ye awful pow'rs, from realms of night
Who vengeful rise the guilty to affright !

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

And thou, grim Dog of Hell,
Before the iron gates of Pluto spread
Enormous on thy horrid bed,
With many a hideous yell
Whilst thy echoing cave resounds,
Guarding fierce those dismal bounds ;
Thou, whom Earth to Tartarus bore,
Cease, oh cease thy dreaded roar ;
Gentle meet him in those glades ;
When he joins the silent shades ;
Ever wakeful, cease t'appal ;
Dog of Hell on thee I call !

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

Mes. O citizens of Athens, to sum up
In fewest words what, to be told at large,
Would need an apter tongue than mine to tell—
King Œdipus—

Cho. Is dead—

Mes. I say not that ;
From human eyes departed, I will say ;
And with such circumstance as, could I tell
All that myself I saw, who saw not all—

Cho. But, if not all, yet what you saw, recount.

Mes. How the blind King, by what interior
light
Guided himself we know not, guided us,
You that were present witness for yourselves ;
And how with Theseus and the woeful Maid
Beside him, and some wondering few behind,
Straightforward, with unhesitating step,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

That needed not his staff to feel the way,
Led on ; till, reach'd the threshold of the road
Which leads, they say, down to the nether world,
Beside the monumental stone that marks
Where our King Theseus and Peirithous,
After long warfare, plighted hands of peace,
He stopp'd, sat down, his tatter'd raiment loosed,
And bade his daughter from the running brook
Bring him wherewith himself to purify.
Which she, resorting to the nearest field
Of Ceres, with what decent haste she might,
Return'd, and wash'd him, and in raiment clean
Reclothed, as to the rite of Burial due.
And when all this was done, as for the Dead,
Weeping himself, he folded in his arms
His weeping child, and told her, from that hour,
She that so long had suffer'd for his sake,
With but the love between them to requite,
The face of him she loved must see no more.
And so they wept together for a while,
Together folded in each other's arms,
And all was silent else ; when suddenly,
A thunder-speaking voice, as from the jaws
Of earth that yawn'd beneath us, call'd aloud :
' Ho ! THOU THERE ! WHY SO LONG A-COMING ?
COME ! '

Then Œdipus, who knew the word, and whence,
Relax'd his folding arms, and, rising up,
Took Theseus' hand, and, in it laying hers,
Besought him never to desert the child,
Nor yield her up to any against her will,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

But be to her the Father whom she lost.
To which King Theseus having pledged his word,
The other, folding in one last embrace,
With one last kiss, his daughter to his heart,
Bade her return with us and never once
Look back on what was not for any one
But for King Theseus and himself to know.
Which said, and all in awful wonder hush'd,
The weeping Daughter turn'd away with us,
Slowly, like those who leave a funeral pyre,
With us our way re-tracing ; until I,
Seized with a longing I could not control,
Despite the word yet ringing in my ears,
Look'd back—and saw King Theseus standing
there,
Stock-still, his hands before his eyes, like one
Smit with a sudden blaze : but Œdipus
There—anywhere—there was not—vanish'd—
gone—
But, whether by some flash from Heav'n despatch'd,
Or by His hand who through the shatter'd Earth
Had summon'd him in thunder, drawn below,
No living man but Theseus' self may know.

CHORUS.

Let not the Man by Man be deem'd unblest,
Who, howsoever in the midnight gloom
Encompass'd of inexorable Doom
That shrouds him from his Zenith to the West,

ŒDIPUS AT ATHENS

Not till he sink below the Verge redeems
His unexpected Lustre in such beams
As reaching Heav'n aloft enshrine his Tomb.

(or as follows)

Strange Destinies of Man ! But in the range
Of Destiny recorded none more strange
Than his, who, from his Sovereign Glory hurl'd,
Among strange men a Spectacle became
Of Horror and Reproach about the World :

Till by the ¹ hand
That drove him forth and forward to the land
Of sacred Athens led, he did repay
The hospitable Welcome of one day
With such Farewell of Welfare as on those
Who serve him some departing God bestows,
His tutelary care bequeathing—yea,
Himself bequeathing albeit pass'd away.

Nor let the Man by Man be deem'd unblest
Who, howsoever in the midnight gloom
Eclipsed of some inexorable Doom
That shrouds him from his Zenith to the West,
Not till he sinks below the Earth redeems
His unextinguish'd lustre in such beams
As rising Zenith-high enshrine his Tomb.

¹ Left blank in MS.

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